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Caroline K. Gran
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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*Organizational Socialization of New Employees:
Examination and Analysis
Within a Large, Diversified Business Organization*

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Communication
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Caroline K. Gran
April 1997

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts,
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Committee

Name	Department/School
<i>Lynn K. Harland</i>	<i>Management Dept College of Business</i>
<i>Randall A. Raso</i>	<i>Communication / Arts & Science</i>
<i>Robert E. Carlson</i>	<i>Communication / Arts & Sciences</i>

Robert E. Carlson
Chairperson

4/17/97
Date

Abstract

This thesis examines organizational socialization of new employees within a large, diversified business organization. Specifically, the study sought to determine if new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive that they are aided in becoming accepted, participating members of the organization and that they possess organizational commitment. In addition, the study sought to determine if there were differences in how employees perceived their position within the organization based on how they were socialized. Statistical analysis showed that a structured socialization program is associated with new employees' feelings of becoming accepted, participating members of the organization. Statistical analysis also showed that such a program was associated with increased organizational commitment for new employees. There were some differences in how employees perceived their position within the organization based on how they were socialized. A qualitative analysis of open-ended question responses yielded important views on organizational socialization. Demographic information about the employee group participating in the study also revealed some noteworthy perceptions of organizational socialization.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Organizational socialization is the focus of study for this thesis. This particular topic focuses on a variety of issues that revolve around how individuals are socialized into organizations. The literature in this area has primarily concentrated on how organizations use various tactics to socialize employees and the roles employees consequently adopt because of these tactics. In addition, much attention has been paid to how organizational socialization is essentially a three-phase process and how this process affects organizational outcomes. Finally, the effects of organizational commitment and satisfaction, based on how employees are socialized, have also been explored.

Based on a review of the related literature and opportunities available for conducting research, an investigation was conducted that centered on employee socialization within an organization that uses a structured socialization program. The review of this literature has shown that the information pertaining to this particular field is somewhat inconclusive; research has been conducted, but the results of such research have not shown consistent conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Socialization Theory: An Introduction

To the newly recruited individual, the organization is alien territory, full of unforeseen surprise.

Organizational entrance upsets one's everyday order. The individual searches for commonsense theories to explain and make meaningful the multitude of activities occurring in the workplace. To come to know a situation and act within it implies that a person has developed a way to interpret the experiences associated with participation in a given social situation (Van Maanen, 1977).

Van Maanen (1977) states that "only during the orientation period is the individual categorically free, for his or her criteria for evaluating organizational activities are most objective and general because he or she is not yet tied down by habit, piety, or precedent" (p. 18). But, no matter how free or objective the newcomer may be, his or her practical problem --- that of making sense of the organizational complexities that now face him or her --- will be of chief concern.

Organizational Socialization: Some Defining Thoughts

According to Van Maanen (1977), organizational socialization concerns the way in which individuals become members and continue as members of an organization, both from the standpoint of the individual and from the

standpoint of others in the organization. Thus, one's work career, from beginning to end, can be used to represent a socialization sequence. Van Maanen (1978) also refers to organizational socialization as a series of experiences whereby individuals learn the ropes of a new organizational position, status, or role that is structured for them by others in the organization. Socialization strategies are most obvious when a person first joins an organization or when an individual is promoted or demoted. They are least obvious when an experienced member of the organization undergoes a simple change of assignment, shift, or job location (Van Maanen, 1978). Regardless of when socialization occurs, it is the longest and most complex part of organizational entry. While selection and training programs are primary influences on how individual capabilities and organizational job requirements work together, socialization activities also influence how individuals are expected to perform on the job. Thus socialization efforts are best judged by the levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job survival of newcomers (Wanous, 1992).

Schein (1968) takes a different approach to defining organizational socialization. He asserts that at its most basic level, insiders within the organization transmit important norms and values to the newcomer. Thus,

socialization is an interpersonal process that can be analyzed and categorized at two levels: statements made about oneself or directed to another person and the group norms that are implied by the actions taken in the former. Jablin (1984) and Schein (1978, 1980) also contend that organizational entry is, from the individual's point of view, a process of breaking in and joining up, of learning the ropes, of figuring out how to get along and how to make it. Wanous (1992) also adds to this definition, stating that "socialization is one way to ensure that newcomers will adhere to the important values of the organization. It is a type of control mechanism to maintain the status quo in an organization" (p. 189).

In its most general sense, organizational socialization is the process in which an individual develops the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role. This process may appear in many forms, ranging from quick, self-guided, trial-and-error processes to more elaborate ones requiring a lengthy preparation period of education and training. This process can produce the following outcomes: 1.) a readiness to select certain events for attention over others; 2.) a stylized stance toward one's routine activities; and 3.) ideas as to how one's various behavioral responses to recurrent situations will be viewed by others. Socialization entails the

learning of a cultural perspective that can be brought to bear on both routine and unusual matters that occur in the workplace (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

When examining a definition of organizational socialization, it is obvious that this construct has been defined differently by nearly every researcher who has examined it. Feldman (1976) has defined organizational socialization as the process by which employees are transformed from organizational outsiders to participating and effective members. Schein (1968) emphasized the learning of organizational rules while Caplow (1964) focused on the development of new self-images and involvements. More recently, however, researchers have come to discuss socialization as the process by which an individual learns the norms, values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge necessary for adopting a particular role and participates as an organizational member. Socialization then becomes a means of self-development and self-maintenance through organizational interactions (Falcione & Wilson, 1988). In addition, Falcione and Wilson (1988) believe that "it is important to better understand organizational socialization, to conduct effective research in this area, and to help organizations increase the effectiveness of their socialization programs" (p. 151).

While examining all of these facets of socialization,

one must exercise caution when distinguishing this concept from organizational orientation. It is important to note at this point that there are some important differences between orientation and socialization. First, the fundamental purpose of newcomer orientation is to help newcomers cope with entry stress. In one sense, various coping methods tend to make the newcomer resilient to change, whereas socialization typically concerns the conformity of newcomers to important norms and values (Wanous, 1992).

Wanous (1992) also contends that newcomer orientation refers to "specific programs, whereas socialization is a term used to describe a process of change rather than any specific action to accomplish the change" (p. 189). Because of this, newcomer orientation is defined as pertaining to the first day, and possibly the first week, of work. Socialization refers to a much longer period of time after someone enters the organization. There is no agreed upon length of time that is considered to be the period of organizational socialization, although the first year is included. Socialization is continuous throughout one's career because it becomes relevant each time a person makes some type of organizational change. In addition, socialization involves many individuals, while orientation is viewed at times as a one-on-one encounter for the employee (Wanous, 1992).

Socialization and orientation are both equally important areas that employees will confront when entering the organization. The learning that takes place for new employees gives them a chance to begin looking at themselves and the organization, and perhaps more importantly, how the two influence each other.

The Learning Process in Organizational Socialization

At no other time during an individual's organizational experience is the formation of an attitude more important and lively, more exciting and uncomfortable, more self-conscious and yet perhaps more deeply unconscious, than in the period of learning and initiation (Van Maanen, 1978). Of importance during this phase is the idea that people in this situation are highly anxious. Because of this, individuals are motivated to reduce this anxiety by learning the functional and social requirements of their new role(s) as quickly as possible.

The learning that takes place at this time does not occur in a social vacuum strictly with the official and available interpretations of the job requirement. Thus, the stability and productivity of any organization depends largely on the way its newcomers develop their particular tasks (Van Maanen, 1978). Van Maanen (1978) asserts that a concern for the ways in which individuals adjust to new circumstances focuses attention not only to the cognitive

learning that accompanies any transition but also to the manner in which the person copes emotionally with the new situation.

Schein (1968) states that the learning process in organizational socialization is based largely on the *learning the ropes* idea previously mentioned. Newcomers listen to and observe the actions of others in the organization; this type of learning is considered to be the most important way in which humans learn. The focus of learning is the new role to be adopted, the new group of organizational norms, and the new organizational values (Schein, 1968).

However, the learning does not appear to be all one way, where the newcomer does all the changing in an atmosphere of strict conformity. There can also be mutual influence between the organization and the newcomer. This influence can best be described as a *psychological contract* in that there is an understanding between the newcomer and organization about what each is expected to do for the other (Schein, 1968).

Schein (1978) explains this *contract*, stating that the most important thing one can do is to learn that one must be both dependent and independent, both a learner and self-starter. The early part of the career revolves around the balance between learning and responding to the demands

of others and identifying and acting on opportunities to take the initiative and develop challenging activities of one's own. One must avoid the trap of trying to get along at either extreme --- waiting for things to be done for one or trying to do everything for oneself. The key is to find the right balance and to pace oneself optimally to overcome feelings of being dependent, to achieve the feeling of being relatively more independent. (pp. 109-110)

Time is also a critical factor in the learning process. One must discover when to take a break, have lunch, or quit work; when to read the paper; how long to stay at a certain pay grade; when to press for a promotion, and so on. The newcomer must develop certain short- and long-range timetables, from how the day's tasks will be divided, to how long to stay at a certain career point. To those in authority positions within the organization, time is also an important resource by which control over others can be exercised. Unclear timetables governing career progression provide an administrator with a most powerful tool by which to influence subordinate behavior. Differences are bound to arise between superior and subordinate regarding certain features of the subordinate's career path. No matter how much structure is embedded in the situation or the degree to which those in authority try to discourage people, the subordinate will most likely try to establish his or her own

progression in the organization (Van Maanen, 1977).

The learning process that occurs during socialization can be impacted by the various tactics the organization uses to socialize its new employees. Whether subtle or obvious, these tactics can influence how employees will respond to their own developing role in the organization and the organization itself.

Socialization Tactics

According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), the phrase *tactics of organizational socialization* refers to the "ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization" (p. 230). The tactics have been illustrated by Falcione and Wilson (1988), Jablin and Krone (1987), Robbins (1994), Schein (1968), Van Maanen (1978, 1979), and Van Maanen and Schein (1979). The tactics, which are explained in greater detail, are as follows:

1. Formal vs. Informal
2. Individual vs. Collective
3. Sequential vs. Nonsequential
4. Fixed vs. Variable
5. Tournament vs. Contest
6. Serial vs. Disjunctive
7. Investiture vs. Divestiture

Formal versus Informal

Formal Socialization

The formality of a socialization process refers to the degree to which the setting is segregated from the ongoing work context and to the degree to which an individual's newcomer role is emphasized and made explicit. The more formal the process, the more emphasis there is on influencing the newcomer's attitudes and values (Van Maanen, 1978). The greater separation of the recruit from the day-to-day reality of the work setting, the less the newcomer will be able to carry over and generalize any abilities or skills learned in the socialization setting. Formal processes concentrate, therefore, more upon attitude than act (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In addition, formal processes serve to provide an intensive period in which others in the organization can closely judge the newcomer's commitment and regard to the organization's critical values (Van Maanen, 1979). Because of this examination, a formal process focuses on preparing a person to occupy a particular status in the organization (Van Maanen, 1978).

As mentioned, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) contend that while formal socialization processes are typically found in organizations where specific preparation for new status is involved, it is considered important that a newcomer learn the *organizationally correct* attitudes, values, and protocol

associated with the new role. In other words, the more formal the process, the more concern there is likely to be shown for the recruit's absorption of the appropriate demeanor and stance associated with the target role. As a result, one begins to think and feel like a United States Marine, an I.B.M. executive, or a Catholic priest.

As stated previously, formal socialization serves to provide an intensive period in which others in the organization can closely judge the newcomer's commitment and respect to the organization's critical values while at the same time prepare the newcomer for a particular status in the organization. For example, recruits in police academies are assessed quite thoroughly by staff members as to their loyalty not only to the organization, but to their fellow recruits as well. Merely passing through a rigorous formal process serves as a test of the recruit's willingness to assume the new role. Often, though, simply the sacrifice and hard work it takes a recruit to complete a very long, formal process serves effectively to fuse the newcomer to the prepared-for role. Thus, given such a process, it is unlikely, though possible, that one will later want to jeopardize the practical value of such a course by quitting or appearing to forget the occupational lessons he or she learned (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Even when formal socialization is explicitly oriented

toward developing what are viewed as practical and particular skills, it may still be difficult by those who go through the process. In effect, the choice of a formal strategy forces all newcomers to endure, absorb, and perhaps become proficient with all the skills and materials presented to them, because they cannot know what is or is not relevant to their particular job. This can often times produce negative effects on the newcomer (Van Maanen, 1978).

Informal Socialization

Informal socialization processes do not distinguish the newcomer's role specifically, nor is there an effort made in such programs to rigidly differentiate the recruit from the other more experienced organizational members. As such, informal tactics provide a laissez-faire socialization for recruits, a type of trial-and-error period of learning. Examples of informal socialization include *on-the-job* assignments or apprenticeships where the recruit's role is not tightly specified. Generally, informal tactics are used in any situation where the newcomer is accepted from the outset as at least a provisional member of a work group and not officially placed into a recruit role by the use of specific labels, assignments, or other symbolic devices used to distinguish newcomers from veteran employees (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Informal socialization processes, wherein a recruit

must negotiate for him- or herself within a far less structured situation, can induce personal anxiety. The newcomer may have trouble discovering the exact dimensions of his or her assigned organizational role. As a result, under most circumstances, informal socialization increases the influence of the immediate work group on the new employee (Van Maanen, 1978).

In an informal atmosphere, there is no distinct differentiation; hence, much of the recruit's learning takes place within the social and task-related networks that surround his or her position (Van Maanen, 1978). Recruits must select their own socialization agents. The value of this mode to the newcomer is then determined largely by the relevant knowledge possessed by a socialization agent and, of course, the agent's ability to transfer such knowledge (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). But, this freedom of choice given to a recruit has a price --- first, they must force others in the setting to teach them and second, mistakes or errors made by recruits in an informal socialization process must be regarded as more costly and serious than mistakes occurring in the formal process. This is due to the fact that real work is interfered with; a recruit who makes mistakes may create considerable trouble for both him- herself and others. Experienced organizational members know full well that mistakes happen, but a recruit is under a

special pressure to perform well during an informal initiation period --- or to at least ask before acting (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Individual versus Collective

Individual Socialization

Van Maanen (1978) states that "the degree to which individuals are socialized singly or collectively is perhaps the most critical of the process variables" (p. 24). The individual mode of socialization refers to the tactic of processing recruits singly and in isolation from one another through a unique set of experiences. Examples of individual socialization are apprenticeship programs, specific intern or trainee assignments, and basic *on-the-job* training, where a recruit is expected to learn a given organizational role on his or her own (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Individual socialization processes are most likely to be associated with complex roles. Further, such modes are frequently followed when there are relatively few incumbents compared to many aspirants for a given role within the organization (Van Maanen, 1979). At those times, individual socialization is preferred when a collective identity among recruits is viewed as less important than the recruit's learning of the operational specifics of the given role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Individual strategies can also bring about personal

change for the newcomer. But the views embraced by those individually socialized are likely to be far less similar than those processed collectively. For example, in psychoanalytic training, the vocabulary of motives a recruit-patient develops to interpret his or her situation is quite personal and specific when compared to the vocabulary that develops in group therapy. However, such socialization can result in deep individual changes --- a type of *secular conversion* --- but these are often lonely changes and are dependent solely upon the particular relationship that exists between agent and recruit (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Collective Socialization

Collective socialization refers to the tactic of taking a group of new employees who are facing a specific boundary passage in the organization and putting them together through a common set of experiences. There are many examples of collective socialization, such as basic training or boot camp in military organizations, pledging in fraternal orders, intensive group training for salespeople in business firms, and education in graduate schools for the scholarly and professional trades (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Van Maanen (1979) also contends that collective socialization programs are usually found in the following:

- 1.) organizations where there are a large number of recruits

to be processed into the same organizationally defined role; 2.) organizations where the content of this role can be clearly specified; and 3.) organizations where the organization desires to build a collective sense of identity, solidarity, and loyalty within the group being socialized.

In collective socialization, the consensual character of the solutions worked out by the group at times allows the members to deviate more from the standards set by the agents than the individual mode of socialization does. As a result, collective processes can provide a potential base for recruit resistance. In highly competitive settings, group members know that their own success is increased through the failure of others. Hence, the social support networks necessary to maintain cohesion in the work group may break down.

However, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) note that "when individuals experience a socialization program collectively, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those in the recruit group almost always reflect an *in the same boat* consciousness" (p. 233). As a result, individual changes in perspective are therefore built upon an understanding of the problems that the group faces. As the group shares its problems, various members can experiment with solutions and present these solutions to the group. In the course of

collective discussions, the members arrive at a definition of their situation and develop a consensus (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Another advantage of collective socialization is that this process often promotes and intensifies the demands of the socialization agent. For example, graduate students are often said to learn more from one another than from the faculty. And, while the socialization agents may have the power to define the nature of the collective problem, the recruits often have more resources available to them to define the solution --- time, experience, motivation, expertise, and patience. As a result, collective tactics often result in formation of an almost separate population within the organization made up solely of recruits, complete with its own argot, areas of discourse, and unique understandings. A cultural perspective is developed that can be brought to bear upon common problems faced by the group (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

With growing bureaucratic structures, the use of collective socialization techniques has increased. Collective tactics, because of their ease, efficiency, and predictability, have tended to replace individual socialization modes in the organization (Van Maanen, 1978).

Sequential versus Nonsequential

Sequential Socialization

Sequential socialization refers to transitional processes marked by a series of discrete and identifiable stages through which an individual must pass in order to achieve a defined role or status within an organization (Van Maanen, 1978). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) state that in some areas of professional training, such as medicine and banking, there is a very sequential process in that the steps leading to the professional role must be negotiated in a specific order.

When exploring sequential strategies, Van Maanen (1978) states that "it is crucial to note the degree to which each stage builds on the preceding stage" (p. 26). For example, courses in most technical training programs are arranged in what is considered a progression from simple to complex material. Conversely, some sequential processes seem to follow no internal logic. Management training is often disjointed, with the curriculum passing from topic to topic with little or no integration across stages. In such cases, individuals tend to learn material they feel most important or interesting (Van Maanen, 1978).

In a sequential process, there is likely to be a strong bias in the presentation by each socialization agent to make the next stage appear favorable. Agents usually mask,

knowingly or unknowingly, the true nature of the stage to follow. If a newcomer feels the future is bright, rewarding, and assured, they will be most cooperative at the stage they are in, not wishing to risk the future they think awaits them (Van Maanen, 1979). When this occurs, the newcomer's best source of information regarding the sequential process is to communicate with another person who has already gone through it. By doing so, the recruit may be able to gain a more reality-oriented perspective (Van Maanen, 1978). In addition, newcomers may receive a range of views about the job from the human resources department, the training division, and colleagues on the job, all of who have much influence in the recruit's transition. Whether these views are positive or negative, such a sequence may actually teach a person to be whatever his or her immediate situation demands (Van Maanen, 1978).

Van Maanen (1978) also contends that "the degree to which an individual is required to keep to a schedule as he goes through the entire sequence is another important aspect of the sequential socialization strategy" (p. 27). A recruit may feel that he or she is being pressured or pushed into certain positions or stages before he or she is ready. This is often the case of the business executive who does not want a promotion but feels that if he or she turns it down, his or her career will be damaged. Or, a professor

may feel that he or she cannot turn down chairing the department without damaging the respectful relationships with his or her faculty members that he or she currently enjoys (Van Maanen, 1978).

Nonsequential Socialization

Nonsequential processes are accomplished in one transitional stage (Van Maanen, 1978). This process occurs when the sequence of steps leading to the target role is unknown, ambiguous, or continually changing (Van Maanen, 1979). A factory worker may become a shop supervisor without benefit of an intermediary training program. A department head in municipal government may become a city manager without first serving as an assistant city manager. A professor may move from a university setting to the corporate world with little knowledge of how the two settings contrast. It is presumed that any organizational position may be analyzed to discover whether intermediate stages of preparation may be required of people taking over that position (Van Maanen, 1978).

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) do contend that recruits who encounter socialization experiences in a random fashion may find themselves exposed to a wide and diverse variety of views and perceptions of the target role that would make it more likely than is true of sequential socialization. It would therefore be appropriate in this context that a

company that wants to groom innovative general managers would do well to avoid sequential processes and encourage more *ad hoc* decision-making procedures in the organization concerning managerial job moves and training experiences.

Fixed versus Variable

Fixed Socialization

Fixed socialization processes provide a recruit with a precise knowledge of the time it will take him or her to complete a given step. The time of transition is standardized. A fixed process provides rigid conceptions of *normal* progress; those who are not on schedule are considered *deviant* (Van Maanen, 1978).

While organizations may specify various career paths having different timetables, all of these paths may be more or less fixed in terms of the degree to which the recruit must follow the determined timetable. For example, some management trainees are put on so-called *fast tracks* and are required to accept new rotational assignments periodically despite their own wishes. On the other hand, others considered to be on *slow* or *regular* tracks may be forewarned not to expect an assignment shift for at least four to five years. This is often true for the promotional policies in most universities, which explicitly specify the number of years a person can be appointed to a given rank. They also explain precisely when a tenure decision must be reached on

a given individual within the university system and whether that person will stay or leave such a setting (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Variable Socialization

Variable socialization processes, by contrast, tend to give recruits few clues as to when to expect transition to the next stage. Most upwardly mobile careers in organizations are marked by variable socialization processes rather than fixed ones because many uncontrolled factors such as the state of the economy and the turnover rates in the upper levels of management may partially determine whether and when any given person will be promoted to the next higher level (Van Maanen, 1979).

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) also assert that what may be true for one person may not be true for another in variable socialization processes. As such, recruits may have to search out clues to what the future holds for them. Rumors and suggestions about who is going where and when they are going characterize situations marked by a variable strategy of socialization. Consider the role of the would-be general manager of a company. He or she often pushes quite hard to discover signs of a coming promotion (or demotion). The individual listens closely to stories concerning the time it takes to advance in the organization, observes as carefully as possible the experiences of others,

and, in general, develops an age consciousness describing the range of appropriate ages for given positions. The individual most often will measure his or her progress against such a combination of these factors.

Variable socialization processes are a very powerful antidote in the formation of group solidarity among potential recruits to certain organizationally defined roles. The movement of people at different rates and according to different patterns makes it virtually impossible for a companion group to remain cohesive and loyal to one another (Van Maanen, 1979). In addition, variable socialization can be a very powerful tool for influencing individual behavior. In this case, time is an important resource that those in management can use to control a recruit's career path within the organization. Because of this, variable processes tend to ultimately divide and drive apart people who might show much loyalty and cohesion if the process were fixed (Van Maanen, 1978).

Tournament versus Contest

Tournament Socialization

The practice of separating selected clusters of recruits into different socialization programs or tracks on the basis of presumed differences in ability, ambition, or background represents the essence of tournament socialization processes. This practice is often done at the

earliest possible date in a person's organizational career. Furthermore, the shifting of people between tracks in a tournament process occurs mainly in one direction: downward. As a result, those on a downward direction in the organization are often eliminated from further consideration within the track they have left (Van Maanen, 1978).

Van Maanen (1978) states that "although little empirical research has been done along these lines, there are strong reasons to believe that some version of the tournament process exists in virtually all large organizations. Often someone who is passed over for a management job once is forever disqualified from that position" (p. 30). Because of its presence, the attractiveness and prevalence of tournament socialization in organizations appear to rest on two major arguments. One is that such processes promote efficient allocation of resources. The other is based primarily on the faith that an accurate and reliable judgment of an individual's potential can be made early in one's career. The principles of selection and personnel psychology can be used to separate the deserving from the undeserving members of the organization (Van Maanen, 1978).

When considering the human factor, tournament socialization is likely to drive a wedge between the people being processed. In tournament situations, each person is

out for him- or herself (Van Maanen, 1978). This is often true for women in organizations. It has been suggested that women in most organizations are on very different tracks from men and have been eliminated from the tournament even before they began. The same has also been indicated for most minority-group members (Van Maanen, 1978).

As one moves through higher and higher levels in the organization, the tournament strategy becomes even more pervasive. As such, there are certain consequences. One is that when tournament processes are used, the accomplishments of an employee are more likely to be explained by the tracking system of that organization than by the particular characteristics of the person. Thus, the person who fails in organization X might well have succeeded in organization Y. Also, those who fall out of the tournament at any stage can be expected to behave only in ways appropriate to their plateaued position, are treated coolly by others, and are discouraged from making further efforts (Van Maanen, 1978).

Contest Socialization

Contest socialization processes, on the other hand, avoid a sharp distinction between those of the same rank. The channels of movement through the various socialization programs are kept open and depend on the observed abilities and stated interests of all (Van Maanen, 1978). Contest socialization is often most noticed in public high schools,

where administrators and teachers have made student tracking decisions by the time the student reaches the ninth grade. As a result, only students on a college-bound track are allowed to take certain courses (Van Maanen, 1978).

Contest socialization, however, implies that preset norms for transition do not exist in any other form than that of demonstrated performance. As such, contest strategies appear to produce a more cooperative and participative spirit among people in an organization. Because one setback does not necessarily entail a permanent loss, people can afford to help one another over various hurdles and a more participative atmosphere can be maintained in the organization (Van Maanen, 1978).

Serial versus Disjunctive

Serial Socialization

The serial socialization process, whereby experienced members groom newcomers who are to assume similar roles in the organization, is perhaps the best guarantee that an organization will not change over long periods of time (Van Maanen, 1978). In the serial mode, experienced members serve as role models for recruits. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) state the role of the police officer follows a serial pattern. Rookies are assigned to only older veteran officers as their first working partners on patrol. They go on further to assert that it is this aspect of policing that

accounts for the remarkable intergenerational stability of behavior patterns among police officers.

Serial socialization can, and most often does, occur in any type of organization, though. Employees in organizations can gain a clearer sense of the future by seeing in their more experienced elders an image of themselves further along in the organization. However, a danger can exist. This image may neither be flattering nor desirable from the viewpoint of recruits; many newcomers may leave the organization rather than face what appears to be an agonizing future. In industrial settings where worker morale is low and turnover is high, a serial pattern of initiating newcomers into the organization would maintain and possibly intensify an already poor situation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Disjunctive Socialization

If a newcomer does not have predecessors available in whose footsteps he or she can follow, the socialization process is labeled disjunctive. Whereas the serial process risks stagnation and contamination, the disjunctive process risks complication and confusion. But, the disjunctive pattern also gives a recruit the chance to be inventive and original (Van Maanen, 1978). Van Maanen (1978) supports this by stating that "without an old guard about to hamper the development of a fresh perspective, the conformity and

lockstep pressures created by the serial mode are absent" (p. 32). It is also true that occasionally the person who is presumably being socialized by another organizational member has more experience and knowledge than the one doing the socializing (Van Maanen, 1979).

A variety of examples can be illustrated to support the disjunctive socialization process. Consider the black firefighter entering a previously all-white engine company or a woman entering managerial ranks in a firm in which such ranks had previously been occupied only by men. In such cases, there are few, if any, persons available who have shared the unique problems faced by the newcomer. Such situations can make things extremely difficult and anxiety-provoking for the newcomer (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The analytic distinction between serial and disjunctive socialization processes is sometimes brought into sharp focus when an organization undertakes a housecleaning whereby old members are swept out the back door and new members are brought in the front door to replace them. In extreme cases, an entire organization can be thrown into a disjunctive mode of socialization with the result that the organization will no longer resemble its former self (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Investiture versus Divestiture

Investiture Socialization

Investiture socialization processes ratify and establish the viability and usefulness of the characteristics the newcomer already possesses (Van Maanen, 1978). This process in a sense says to the newcomer, "We like you just as you are." The organization that uses this tactic does not want to change the recruit. Rather, it takes advantage of and builds upon the skills, values, and attitudes the recruit is thought to possess. From this stance, investiture processes substantiate and perhaps enhance the newcomer's view of him- or herself (Van Maanen, 1978).

At times, positions on the bottom rungs of the organizational ladders are filled by using this tactic as newcomers to these positions are handled with much concern. Investiture processes attempt to make entrance into a given organizationally defined role as smooth and trouble free as possible. Orientation programs, career counseling, relocation assistance, social functions, tuition reimbursement programs, and employee assistance programs systematically suggest to newcomers that they are valuable to the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Such options, therefore, aim to increase the recruit's commitment to the organization.

Divestiture Socialization

Divestiture processes, on the other hand, are destined to deny and strip away certain entering characteristics of the recruit (Van Maanen, 1978). For example, many aspects of professional training, such as the first year of medical and law school and the novitiate period associated with religious orders, are organized explicitly to disconfirm many aspects of the recruit's entering self-image, thus beginning the process of rebuilding the individual's self-image based upon new assumptions. As a result, these new assumptions can often arise from a recruit's own discovery that they have an ability to do things they had not thought they were able to do previously (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

An interesting aspect of divestiture processes is that many organizations promote ordeals designed primarily to make the recruit whatever the organization deems appropriate. In the more extreme cases, recruits are isolated from former associates, must abstain from certain types of behavior, must publicly degrade themselves and others through various kinds of mutual criticism, and must follow a rigid set of sanctionable rules and regulations. When undergone voluntarily, this process serves to commit and bind people to the organization (Van Maanen, 1978, 1979).

Van Maanen (1978) also states that "divestiture rather

than investiture strategies are more likely to produce similar results among recruits. And, it should be kept in mind, the ordeal aspects of a divestiture process represent an identity-bestowing, as well as an identity-destroying, process" (p. 34). For example, some business occupations, such as certified public accounting, have stiff licensing requirements which, to many recruits, appear like a divestiture process. In this instance, divestiture can be a device for prompting many personal changes that are evaluated positively by the person and others. What can be problematic is that divestiture in this sense can have the possibility of misuse in the hands of irresponsible socialization agents (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Organizational Socialization: A Three-Phase Process

The tactics an organization uses to socialize its new employees and how new employees respond to these socialization methods may determine how new employees will fit within the organization. However, the process of socialization is equally important when determining how new employees will respond to their organizational roles. Socialization is conceptualized as a three-phase process that has been described by Conrad (1990), Feldman (1981), Jablin and Krone (1987), Robbins (1994), and Schein (1978). Transition into the organization is classified into three stages, While researchers have given these stages different

names, the purpose of each stage is essentially identical. The first stage is the prearrival, also referred to as the entry or anticipatory, stage. This stage includes 1.) the period of preparation and training on the part of the individual; 2.) the recruitment and selection process that occurs prior to accepting a job; and 3.) the actual hiring decision and initial job placement. The second stage is the actual socialization process, which has also been called the encounter stage. In this stage, the new employee actually sees what the organization is really like and confronts the likelihood that expectations and reality may diverge. Metamorphosis, also known as mutual acceptance and change/acquisition and identification, is the third stage. This stage focuses on the various processes of formally and informally granting full membership to the new employee through initiation rites, special status or privileges, and more challenging and important job assignments. For the purposes of this thesis, the stages will be identified as prearrival, encounter, and metamorphosis.

The First Stage: Entering the Organization

According to Feldman (1981), prearrival encompasses all the learning that occurs before a new member joins an organization. Jablin and Krone (1987) describe this process as the "ways in which individuals seek and transmit information about jobs, make employment decisions, and

develop expectations about what it will be like in the organization in which they are considering working" (p. 715). Jablin (1984) states that the two main activities the individual engages in this stage are forming job expectations and making employment decisions. Consequently, if the prospective recruit does not become a member of the organization, the organization's socialization process does not construct a new individual, so to speak, but rather attempts to reconstruct him or her.

One of the most distinguishing outcomes of the recruiting process is that new hires characteristically enter organizations with inflated expectations of what work will be like. This is problematic because the more inflated the recruit's expectations of his or her organization's communication climate, for example, the lower the recruit's level of job satisfaction and the higher probability of job turnover. This is complicated further as there is limited knowledge of how applicants seek and respond to positive and negative information during the recruitment interview (Jablin and Krone, 1987). Success then depends on the degree to which the recruit has correctly anticipated the expectations and desires of those in the organization in charge of selection (Robbins, 1994).

Jablin and Krone (1987) state that the prearrival stage consists of two related phases: occupational anticipatory

socialization and organizational socialization. Relevant outcomes for both processes include choosing among alternative job opportunities and developing expectations. Some questions have come up based on this assumption: To what extent does the communication of information from each of these sources shape the occupational choices individuals make? How does information from each source affect individuals' perceptions and expectations of the communication characteristics of occupations in various career areas? Generalizable answers to these questions are not currently available, but relevant research is in progress. At some point after individuals have chosen, or in some cases *fallen into*, occupations, the experience of anticipatory socialization begins.

The Second Stage: Encountering the Organization

The encounter phase of socialization occurs during the initial weeks or months of one's employment in an organization and typically involves day-to-day experiences in which the individual is subject to the reinforcement policies and practices of the organization and its members. These early experiences in the organization are considered critical to the development of attitudes and behaviors consistent with organizational expectations. This stage can be very stressful and disorienting for new recruits because they may have difficulty making sense of their new work

settings. They must detach themselves from their own expectations, values, and behaviors that they discover to be incompatible with their organizations' cultures (Feldman, 1981; Jablin and Krone, 1987, Robbins, 1994).

One key feature of this stage is *reality shock*, which has been studied by a number of researchers (Conrad, 1990; Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Jablin, 1984; Schein, 1978; and Van Maanen, 1977). Schein (1978) contends that the "newcomer, under normal conditions, assumes that he or she knows what the organization is about, assumes others in the setting have the same idea, and usually never bothers to see if these two assumptions are the same. What occurs upon experience is that the newcomer receives a surprise of sorts (reality shock) in which he or she discovers that significant others in the organization do not share his or her assumptions" (p. 20).

Jablin (1984) asserts further that if the recruit's experiences resulting from the prearrival stage are accurate with the reality of organizational life, the encounter stage is one of reaffirmation and reinforcement of existing beliefs and behaviors. Conversely, if the new employee's expectations are not congruent with the organizational reality, the stage involves a destructive phase that will serve to detach the individual from his or her former expectations. This is when reality shock is most prevalent.

In addition to the occurrence of reality shock during the encounter stage is the importance of the relationship the new employee develops with coworkers and superiors. Van Maanen (1977) states that "one illustrative feature of organizational normality is found generally in the expression of authority relationships and in one's response to them" (p. 25). The new employee must learn when to be deferential or argumentative, when to be patient or to press ahead, and even when to be seen or not seen. It is vital for the new employee to typify the boss's normal behavior in various contexts and also develop ways as to how one acts accordingly in such contexts. New employees will make mistakes, but such mistakes typically represent a crucial part of the encounter stage (Van Maanen, 1977).

At this point of the encounter stage, Falcione and Wilson (1988) state that, "the communication transactions that take place between superiors and subordinates are critical to organizational socialization. First, the supervisor may be considered a key communicator. In addition, the supervisor typically assigns tasks and delegates responsibility, so is in a position to make clear expectations of the newcomer" (pp. 157-158). The supervisor is in a position to interact frequently with the subordinate, and thus may function as a mentor or role model for the subordinate. It is also noted that the supervisor

may build a personal relationship with the subordinate, beyond the formal relationship. Such a relationship may help build trust and openness between the superior and the subordinate and may facilitate information exchange. The exchanges between supervisors and newcomers can significantly influence how the newcomer develops perceptions, expectations, rules, and appropriate behaviors within the organization (Falcione & Wilson, 1988).

The relationship the new employee builds with coworkers is equally important. To the extent the new employee's coworkers accomplish various organizational functions, coworkers will then facilitate the socialization process. Work group members can help the newcomer define and adapt to organizational expectations and norms. For example, by offering feedback, veterans can help clarify role expectations and reduce role ambiguity for the new employee. Work group members can also aid the newcomer in interpretation and understanding of confusing or unclear situations; they can serve as *sounding boards* for the newcomer by listening to and clarifying the new hire's perceptions of the new work environment. Veteran work group members are in a position to possess informal and private cultural knowledge that may not be accessible from organizational documents or the supervisor. Finally, the work group may provide a forum for the newcomer to express

and clarify his or her own needs and expectations in order to develop his or her own organizational role (Falcione & Wilson, 1988).

When considering the combination of the superior/subordinate and newcomer/coworker relationship, there are other sources of information in addition to those already discussed that have potential influences on the development of roles and interpretive schemas that the newcomer has with superiors and coworkers. Among socialization theorists, it is widely held that formal role requirements are transmitted by supervisors while informal expectations are acquired through interactions with coworkers. However, consistent with social learning theory predictions, when supervisors are frequently unavailable or inaccessible and when their directives are of questionable validity and competence, subordinates may attend to more information from coworkers than from superiors. In many situations, formal and informal sources of information may convey contradictory behavioral and attitudinal expectations and thus lead newcomers to experience role conflict (Jablin and Krone, 1987).

Pacanowksy and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1983) offer a perspective that can help the newcomer work with veteran employees to achieve his or her own role within in the organization. They state that rituals and stories are

excellent ways for socializing new members. New employees can learn a great deal about the organization and their superiors and coworkers through a combination of some or all of the organizational rituals. Rituals provide the new employee with a way of looking at the organization as a type of folklore, in which workplace traditions are passed from employee to employee. This is achieved in the following ways:

1. Personal rituals are behaviors performed by specific organizational members as a function of their position, role, or unique characteristics. Newcomers can learn and adapt these rituals to their own situations. Personal rituals for some could include reading the *Wall Street Journal* before beginning the day's work or starting the work day earlier than others in order to avoid interruption.
2. Task rituals consist of what must be performed in order to get the job done. These rituals may take the form of training programs, instructional materials, or certain structured phases one must go through.
3. Social rituals consist of office parties or other similar social events that allow the newcomer to become part of the organization on a social level.
4. Organizational rituals are those meetings or activities sponsored by the organization such as shareholders

meetings, staff meetings, or committees formed in order to conduct organizational business or activity. New employees may gain a feeling of acceptance by participating in these types of rituals.

5. Story-telling is probably the most consistent type of ritual used in socializing new employees. Personal stories describe individual members of the organization, while collegial stories are shared stories describing other members of the organization. Corporate stories describe the organization's ideology, values, and culture, while organizational history stories describe factual information such as a chronology of historical events.

As the new employee charts his or her way through the encounter stage, Feldman (1981) states that one should be able to assess an individual's progress as a way to determine if the stage has been a positive or negative one for the new employee. These *progress variables* contend that the newcomer should 1.) show progress in dealing with those conflicts that arise between personal and work life; 2.) begin successfully managing intergroup role conflicts; 3.) define and sort out his or her role, gain a better understanding of and ability to perform required tasks; and 4.) show an awareness of group norms, which includes establishing new friendships and good working relationships

with others in the group. The new employee can then move on to settling into the organization with a certain degree of comfort and confidence.

The Third Stage: Metamorphosis

During metamorphosis, the recruit begins to become an accepted, participating member of the organization by learning new behaviors and attitudes or modifying existing ones. This stage of socialization is to some degree a constant feature of all employees' lives (Jablin & Krone, 1987). It is during metamorphosis that the employee will typically initiate attempts to individualize his or her role in the organization. In addition, it appears as if the nature of the superior-subordinate relationship that develops prior to and during this period is critical to the success of the employee's socialization efforts because it is with one's supervisor that an individual must ultimately negotiate his or her organizational role (Jablin & Krone, 1987).

Conrad (1990) states that during successful metamorphosis, many individuals may believe and proudly say, "I'm an IBMer" in a way that suggests they have identified completely with the organization. They realize that their commitment is based mostly on coinciding goals and functional ties. At the same time, these employees learn the taken-for-granted assumptions of the culture without

accepting them uncritically. On a final note, Conrad (1990), states that metamorphosis is considered successful "when newcomers so totally accept the assumptions of an organizational culture that they forget that they are assumptions --- guidelines and constraints on employees' actions that the employees have chosen to accept" (p. 43). In essence, this is what metamorphosis is all about.

Organizational Role Orientation

The outcomes of the socialization tactics and the three-phase process discussed earlier will invariably produce a role that the new employee will adopt. Conrad (1990) states that "although it is important to recognize just how strong socialization processes are, it is equally important to realize that newcomers can choose from a number of different orientations to their new organization" (p. 38).

First, newcomers can become custodians of their organizationally assigned role, choosing to interpret their situation as veteran members say they should and acting only in ways the organization prefers. They can also be innovators, conforming to broad, general, and sacrosanct expectations but at the same time behaving in unique and different ways that are perhaps in response to minor or noncontroversial events within the organization. Or, newcomers can become radicals who violate both important and

minor guidelines and constraints the organization imposes (Conrad, 1990).

According to Conrad (1990), the first step in choosing a suitable orientation is recognizing that what may be most productive for the newcomer may not be what the organization wants. Most organizations desire a custodial orientation; when newcomers conform to established ways of perceiving their environment, they help to maintain the stability and predictability of the organizational culture. As a result, this response may be productive for all in the organization. If the organization is doing well and its employees have developed comfortable and rewarding patterns of acting and communicating, it is beneficial to maintain those patterns. Conformation of this type is advantageous for newcomers because it allows them to become part of a team-like atmosphere.

On the other hand, an appealing orientation for the newcomer is to take the radical role. While some organizational roles may be highly productive for the organization, the radical role provides the newcomer with opportunities to meet his or her own needs or achieve his or her own goals (Conrad, 1990). Conrad (1990) contends that by the time one adopts a radical role, he or she has had enough experiences in the organization to realize that neither a custodial nor an innovator role is desirable. For

example, one could realize that he or she has too little organizational power to effect any change in particular situations. The employee may need to effectively breach both important and minor organizational guidelines and constraints in order to be effective in his or her position.

In still some other cases the most desirable role is that of innovator --- a person who conforms to some of the expectations of the organization but rejects others by displaying behaviors that are novel and unexpected. Most organizations do have a degree of flexibility; innovators usually accept some of the pressures and constraints they encounter and dismiss or try to modify others. To make innovative choices, newcomers must do two things: 1.) they must be aware of their values and goals be comfortable with them, and 2.) they must gain accurate information about the relative importance of the organization's expectations and assumptions (Conrad, 1990). By combining these two ideas, a newcomer can mesh his or her own values and goals and still adhere to what the organization expects him or her to represent.

Outcomes of Organizational Socialization

While employees go through the socialization process, it is important to consider what types of outcomes will occur as a result. Falcione and Wilson (1988) assert that the most frequent outcomes of organizational socialization

include items such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, decision making, longevity, and turnover. For the purposes of this thesis, job satisfaction and commitment are explored.

Mowday and Steers (1979) define commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 224). Commitment thus illustrates a condition in which a new employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and, in turn, aspires to stay with the organization in order to facilitate these goals (Mowday and Steers, 1979). Three characteristics depict this definition of organizational commitment: 1.) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; 2.) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3.) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday and Steers, 1979).

Falcione and Wilson (1988) find that there are two important aspects of organizational commitment among new employees in addition to those defined by Mowday and Steers (1979): 1.) working with others rather than working alone, and 2.) working interdependently within a team environment. These two assumptions can provide some measure of how committed the new employee will be to the organization. Based on these two assumptions, Falcione and Wilson (1988)

contend that "integration into communication networks within the organization appears to have an influence on employee attitudes and perceptions of the job and organization. Network integration has been shown to be positively related to morale and commitment" (p. 161). For example, newcomers tend to attach themselves to significant others in the organization, particularly in the early stages of socialization. This attachment can have a lasting influence on the employee's later attitudes and commitment to the organization. In addition, newcomers can develop perceptions of the organization that are correlated with feelings of organizational commitment when interactions with and observations of veteran members are present (Falcione & Wilson, 1988). It is likely, then, that new employees may experience a higher degree of organizational commitment if they feel they are part of a team environment than that of working alone.

Another related aspect of commitment is that of job competence. It has been shown that a positive relationship exists between task proficiency and organizational commitment. As new employees become more competent and successful in their jobs, their levels of commitment tend to increase. This may be due, in part, to the type of expectations placed on new employees. As reasonably high expectations are placed on new employees, commitment to the

organization usually increases (Falcione & Wilson, 1988).

Feldman (1981) adds to this notion of the relationship between competence and commitment. Feldman (1981) states that "a relationship may also exist between task mastery and job turnover. Low performers should be both less satisfied and more likely to leave their jobs than high performers" (p. 315). It is also indicated that high performance may heighten expectations concerning organizational rewards, and vice versa. This concept is consistent to views expressed by Falcione and Wilson (1988).

If employees are committed to the organization, does that in turn suggest that they are satisfied with their organizational role? How can one determine a new employee's job satisfaction? When discussing job satisfaction, Falcione and Wilson (1988) state that "expectations and perceptions are influenced by ambient and discretionary messages communicated to the employee by others in the organization and, to a large degree, the newcomer's job satisfaction is affected by those messages" (p. 162). This notion is supported by three things: 1.) the employee's perceptions of the affective components of the organizational environment; 2.) the messages provided to the employee by the social context about what is and isn't appropriate; and 3.) the employee's self-perception as influenced by individual history, past behavior, and causal

attributions (Falcione & Wilson, 1988). For example, as an employee starts to structure and restructure the organizational environment by reducing uncertainty through network integration and communication transactions, relational and task-related expectations are clarified and roles become more clearly defined. When uncertainty is reduced, expectations are negotiated and role demands better clarified, the newcomer's job satisfaction is expected to be greater (Falcione & Wilson, 1988).

When considering role demands, Feldman (1981) also supports the idea that role demands and satisfaction are highly correlated. Research has found that three types of role-making behavior (role definition, management of intergroup role conflicts, and management of outside-life conflicts) correlate with general satisfaction. For example, members of work groups with more latitude in negotiating roles reported less difficulty in dealing with superiors, perceived the superior's behavior as more responsive to their job needs, and expressed more positive attitudes about the inherent outcomes of their work and interpersonal relationships. Role conflicts both at work and between work and personal lives often act negatively against each other and, as a result, often decrease general satisfaction (Feldman, 1981).

A secondary relationship may also exist between task

mastery and general satisfaction. Similar to commitment, high performance should lead to both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and ultimately to general satisfaction. However, it has also been shown that empirically the relationship between performance and satisfaction is not especially strong. But, the relationship should remain when the organization's reward system is equitable and performance contingent on such rewards (Feldman, 1981).

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the socialization process in an organization. As shown in the three-phase socialization process described earlier, employees are continually socialized; therefore, socialization does not encompass new employees only.

This particular study investigated the socialization of ConAgra Corporate Headquarters employees who have been with the organization since January 1, 1994. ConAgra uses a specific program to socialize new employees that was instituted in mid-1995. Employees hired prior to 1995 did not participate in a formal structured socialization program; however, ConAgra was committed informally to the socialization of new employees.

In order to obtain a comprehensive view of the value of a structured socialization program, it was necessary to include as part of the study those employees who did not

participate in the program. The items in the questionnaire for this group of employees that pertained to the New Employee Orientation Meeting were revised; the items were worded to reflect the general message of the program, but in a way that denoted non-participation by this particular employee group. By analyzing the responses of both program participants and non-participants, any differences in perceptions of organizational socialization were determined.

To conduct the research, a questionnaire was developed primarily through information provided by ConAgra Corporate Human Resources personnel. The information pertained to the interview process, the first month of employment, the New Employee Orientation Meeting conducted by ConAgra Corporate Human Resources personnel (if the employee did not attend this meeting, items in this section of the questionnaire were revised), overall response to organizational commitment, open-ended questions regarding the entry experience into the organization, and general demographic questions.

The questionnaire was also written to reflect various concepts discussed in the literature review. The entire socialization process that ConAgra instills to its new employees encompasses a combination of those tactics described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979). The New Employee Orientation Meeting that new employees attended was related

to the formal process of socialization; in addition, a collective mode of socialization was incorporated in this meeting. However, most new employees are not collectively socialized during the day-to-day work environment. New employees are often forced to learn the job on their own; a *sink or swim* environment is often what the new employee encounters while he or she learns the new job.

Items in the questionnaire also concentrated on how tasks were learned in the organization: did the new employee learn tasks sequentially or nonsequentially? And, when learning the job, were employees able to move in a fixed or variable rate within the organization? One item that was stressed in the orientation meeting that was highly relevant to these socialization tactics was how ConAgra encouraged new employees to bring their values and beliefs to the job, thereby stressing an investiture, rather than divestiture, strategy.

The items in the questionnaire also considered what types of roles employees embraced during the socialization process. ConAgra stresses to new employees the need for an innovator type of role for employees; however, new employees may feel that a custodial role is an appropriate one to adopt in the early stages of employment. Given the conservative nature of ConAgra, it was implied that a radical role would not be accepted in most areas of the

Company.

The questionnaire also stressed the three-phase process suggested by Conrad (1990), Feldman (1981), Jablin and Krone (1987), Robbins (1994), and Schein (1978). The first part of the questionnaire focused on the prearrival stage, where potential ConAgra employees go through the interview and hiring process. The majority of the questionnaire concentrated on the actual socialization process, which is also known as the encounter stage. Questionnaire items focused on the first month of employment (learning the job, developing relationships with both manager(s) and coworker(s), and experiencing the organizational culture) and the New Employee Orientation Meeting. In addition, items addressing *reality shock* were useful in addressing the new employee's expectations prior to working at ConAgra and the reality of those expectations once employed. While the third stage, metamorphosis, probably has not occurred to all of the employees in this study, it was possible that employees in the study were already establishing a position within the organization and making the determination of whether or not to accept the organizational role.

In addition to exploring the actual socialization process of new employees, the questionnaire also examined aspects of organizational commitment. The items related to organizational commitment in the questionnaire that were

related to organizational commitment were originally used in Mowday and Steers' (1979) *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ). Fifteen items were used to measure organizational commitment; six of these items were negatively phrased. Measuring organizational commitment is critical in that it can reveal how a new employee accepts the organization's goals and values and, in turn, how much the new employee will contribute to the organization.

Finally, the questionnaire reflected the research questions of this study. The questionnaire was aimed to analyze new employee socialization within an organization that uses a structured socialization program. It also addressed the different ways employees developed and assumed their roles within the organization. Finally, the questionnaire focused on whether employees developed a commitment to the organization based on how they were socialized.

The questionnaire was used to gather response data addressing the following research questions:

1. Do new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive that they are aided in becoming accepted, participating members of the organization?
2. Do new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive that they possess

organizational commitment?

3. What differences, if any, are there in how new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive their position with the organization based on how they are socialized?

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Study Subjects and Setting

ConAgra, Inc., is a diversified international food company, employing approximately 80,000 employees worldwide. ConAgra is divided into five major segments: ConAgra Grocery Products Companies, ConAgra Diversified Products Companies, ConAgra Refrigerated Foods Companies, ConAgra Agri-Products Companies, and ConAgra Trading and Processing Companies. The subjects of the study were 89 employees of ConAgra Corporate Headquarters, located in Omaha, Nebraska. The subjects were individuals who have been employed by the Company since January 1, 1994.

This study was intended to coincide with a newly-instituted structured socialization program developed by ConAgra Corporate Human Resources personnel. The purpose of the program is to welcome new employees to the organization, review ConAgra's business philosophy, orient employees to the organization's philosophy, explain job expectations and performance reviews, and instill a sense of commitment to a professional environment.

Instruments Used

The following instruments were used to conduct the research: two types of questionnaires, which included both Likert-type items and open-ended questions (employees who

participated in the structured socialization program received one type of questionnaire, while employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program received a different type of questionnaire); introductory cover letter; and follow-up notice. (See Appendices A, B, C, D and E.)

Procedures

The procedures for executing this questionnaire were as follows: After identifying and verifying the employment status of the population receiving the questionnaire, mailing labels for each person were generated.

Each introductory cover letter and questionnaire were mailed on April 12, 1996, to each participant through the Company's interoffice mail service. Along with the questionnaire, participants received a letter stating that the purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data for a research project needed to fulfill the requirements of an academic degree. It was stated in the letter that the appropriate ConAgra personnel reviewed the questionnaire and gave the researcher permission to distribute it to employee participants. Participants were assured that while the Company would be provided with questionnaire results, the questionnaire results would remain the confidential property of the researcher. Respondents were asked to return the questionnaire through interoffice mail services within ten

days of receiving it. A follow-up notice was mailed after ten days of mailing the questionnaires. The notice thanked those employees who returned the questionnaire and asked those who had not to do so. After one week of sending the follow-up notice, those returned questionnaires were coded and evaluated.

The response rate was initially low for those questionnaires sent to employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program. As a result, a second mailing that included a larger base of this particular employee group was mailed on May 3, 1996. By doing so, an acceptable response of usable questionnaires was completed and returned.

Data Analysis

Once all questionnaires were received, they were coded and scored and statistically analyzed.

Sections one, two, three, and four from both types of questionnaires were factor analyzed. In addition, relationships among the three sections were examined by a correlation analysis.

Demographic information items included in the questionnaire were treated as independent variables. The scaled questionnaire responses were treated as dependent variables. The t-test and analysis of variance techniques were used to analyze differences in dependent variables

based on independent variable classification. In addition, the three open-ended questions were qualitatively evaluated. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data provided answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Of the 89 total questionnaires that were distributed, 53 usable responses were received, yielding an overall response rate of 59.6%. Thirty-eight of the 60 employees who participated in the structured socialization program responded (63.3% of those surveyed) and 15 of the 29 employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program responded (51.7% of those surveyed).

Responses to the questions in section six yielded the descriptive information about the employees who responded to the questionnaire, which is highlighted in Table I.

The results presented in this chapter are derived from the following statistical tests conducted on sections one, two, three, four, and six of the two types of questionnaires: frequencies (descriptive statistics showing means and standard deviations), factor analysis, Pearson product-moment correlations, and t-tests. Responses to the three open-ended questions in section five are included in Appendices F and G and are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Items from both types of questionnaires are found in Appendix D (for employees who participated in the structured socialization program) and Appendix E (for employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program).

TABLE I

RESPONDENT'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (N=53) FOR SECTION SIX

	TOTAL	PARTICIPANTS	NON-PARTICIPANTS
Employee Status			
Exempt	31	23	8
Non-exempt	21	14	7
Sex			
Male	25	16	9
Female	27	21	6
Employee Start Date			
Month			
January	1	1	0
February	1	1	0
March	1	1	0
April	2	2	0
May	6	6	0
June	6	6	0
July	4	2	2
August	3	1	2
September	9	6	3
October	9	6	3
November	3	0	3
December	5	3	2
Year			
1994	15	0	15
1995	38	38	0
Age Group			
up to age 25	4	3	1
25 to 34	33	22	11
35 to 44	9	8	1
45 to 54	5	3	2
over 55	1	1	0

FREQUENCIES (Means and Standard Deviations (SD))

A frequencies test was conducted on both types of questionnaires in order to obtain an overall picture of the data. Specifically, means and standard deviations (SD) were extracted for this particular test. Frequencies tests were conducted on sections one and two of both types of questionnaires. Frequencies tests were also conducted on sections three and four of both types of questionnaires where the questions were identical. Frequencies for the items in these sections are indicated in Table II.

Because there were some questions in section three of both types of questionnaires that were not identical, means and standard deviations (SD) for these questions are illustrated in Table III.

TABLE II

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) FOR ALL IDENTICAL
QUESTIONS IN SECTIONS ONE, TWO, THREE AND FOUR

Section One - Interview Process

N=53

	Mean	SD
1.	2.48	1.15
2.	1.88	.80
3.	1.62	.60
4.	2.52	.91
5.	2.19	1.02
6.	2.23	.93
7.	2.74	1.30

Section Two - First month of employment

N=53

	Mean	SD
8.	2.66	.94
9.	2.38	.95
10.	3.43	1.15
11.	3.06	1.17
12.	2.06	1.03
13.	2.49	1.38
14.	2.79	1.31
15.	2.77	1.17
16.	1.66	.76
17.	2.77	1.22
18.	3.15	1.36
19.	3.27	1.09
20.	2.81	1.05
21.	2.21	.91
22.	3.17	1.16

TABLE II

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) FOR ALL IDENTICAL
 QUESTIONS IN SECTIONS ONE, TWO, THREE AND FOUR
 (CONTINUED)

Section Three - Organizational culture, mission, environment

Identical questions from section three of both types of
 questionnaires (PQ = Participant Question;
 NPQ = Non-participant Question)

N=53

		Mean	SD
PQ	NPQ		
25.	23.	2.23	.82
26.	24.	1.94	.81
28.	25.	1.76	.73
29.	26.	1.89	.87
30.	27.	2.40	1.12
32.	29.	1.85	.79
33.	30.	1.96	.83

TABLE II
 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) FOR ALL IDENTICAL
 QUESTIONS IN SECTIONS ONE, TWO, THREE AND FOUR.
 (CONTINUED)

Section Four - Commitment to the organization

Identical questions from section four of both types of
 questionnaires (PQ = Participant Question;
 NPQ = Non-participant Question)

N=53

		Mean	SD
PQ	NPQ		
35.	31.	1.62	.49
36.	32.	1.89	.90
37.	33.	1.90	.89
38.	34.	3.40	1.07
39.	35.	2.29	.85
40.	36.	1.73	.74
41.	37.	3.33	1.06
42.	38.	2.59	.88
43.	39.	2.19	.95
44.	40.	2.14	.90
45.	41.	2.20	1.04
46.	42.	2.18	.77
47.	43.	1.70	.58
48.	44.	2.71	.94
49.	45.	1.71	.85

TABLE III

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD) FOR ALL DIFFERENT
QUESTIONS IN SECTION THREE

Section Three - New Employee Orientation Meeting
(Employees participating in the structured socialization
program)

N=38

	Mean	SD
23.	1.97	.72
24.	1.92	.71
27.	2.46	.84
31.	2.61	1.10
34.	2.40	.71

Section Three - Organizational culture, mission, environment
(Employees not participating in the structured socialization
program)

N=15

	Mean	SD
28.	2.20	.94

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analyses with varimax rotation were performed on all the identical questions in sections one, two, three and four of both types of questionnaires to determine if different variables were in fact measuring something in common within each section. The sample size in this study was small for factor analysis techniques. However, it was felt that important insights could be gained by examining the results even though there were severe limitations in using such statistical procedures with such a small data sample.

To show the commonalities for those questions that defined the factors in each section, descriptive labels were assigned to each factor. In addition, factor scores were computed for this particular factor analysis. Factor loadings, factor labels, eigenvalues and percent of variance for each factor are shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

Section One Interview Process
Both Groups

		<u>Eigenvalue</u>	<u>Percent of Variance</u>
Factor I	Information about the Company	3.25	46.5%
Factor II	Information about the specific department	1.39	19.9%

<u>Item</u>	<u>Factor I</u>	<u>Factor II</u>
1	.25	.67*
2	.89*	-.03
3	.79*	.17
4	.75*	.33
5	.19	.87*
6	.07	.89*
7	.58*	.31

* Indicates primary items loading on a factor

Question Description

- 1 = description of job duties
- 2 = relevant information
- 3 = place I want to work
- 4 = realistic expectations
- 5 = pertinent information
- 6 = realistic job expectations
- 7 = talk openly with coworkers

TABLE IV
 ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX
 (CONTINUED)

Section Two First Month of Employment
 Both Groups

		<u>Eigenvalue</u>	<u>Percent of Variance</u>
Factor I	Open communication with managers	5.57	37.1%
Factor II	Training and development	2.33	15.6%
Factor III	Human Resources support	1.30	8.7%
Factor IV	Company philosophy	1.10	7.3%

Item	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
8	.26	-.08	.41	.74*
9	.62*	.21	-.17	.31
10	.02	.51*	.07	.68*
11	.27	.28	.17	.61*
12	.82*	.07	.11	.21
13	-.04	-.00	.84*	.25
14	-.24	.42	.72*	.24
15	.43	.67*	.22	-.14
16	.60*	.18	.50*	-.11
17	.71*	.49	-.01	.16
18	.38	.70*	.12	.05
19	.16	.77*	.13	.21
20	.09	.62*	-.10	.30
21	.86*	.20	-.03	.00
22	.68*	.15	-.32	.23

* Indicates primary items loading on a factor

Question Description

- 8 = manager explained philosophy
- 9 = reinforcement of job expectations
- 10 = performance reviews
- 11 = equal employment opportunity
- 12 = problems and/or concerns about job
- 13 = Human Resources contact in first week
- 14 = Human Resources contact in first month
- 15 = employee's job expectations
- 16 = rapport with coworkers
- 17 = managerial guidance and support
- 18 = formal training
- 19 = sequential learning of tasks
- 20 = mastering tasks
- 21 = ideas on how to perform job
- 22 = questions about job

TABLE IV
 ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX
 (CONTINUED)

Section Three Organizational culture, mission, environment

Identical questions from section three of both types of questionnaires (PQ = Participant Question; NPQ = Non-participant Question)

		<u>Eigenvalue</u>	<u>Percent of Variance</u>
Factor I	Company mission/ philosophy	2.32	33.2%
Factor II	Company activities	1.54	22.0%
Factor III	Company culture	1.16	16.6%

Item		Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
PQ	NPQ			
25	23	-.05	-.03	.92*
26	24	.41	.05	.76*
28	25	.79*	.11	.15
29	26	.78*	-.14	-.01
30	27	.72*	.22	.13
32	29	.00	.87*	.05
33	30	.12	.89*	-.04

* Indicates primary items loading on a factor

Question Description

PQ	NPQ	
25	23	= Company culture
26	24	= cultural adaption
28	25	= Company philosophy
29	26	= Company mission
30	27	= supportive environment
32	29	= relationships with others
33	30	= Company activities

TABLE IV
 ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX
 (CONTINUED)

Section Four - Commitment to the organization

Identical questions from section four of both types of questionnaires (PQ = Participant Question; NPQ = Non-participant Question)

		<u>Eigenvalue</u>	<u>Percent of Variance</u>
Factor I	Employment decision	6.22	41.5%
Factor II	Shared organizational values	1.72	11.5%
Factor III	Concern about Company success	1.21	8.1%
Factor IV	Job assignment	1.05	7.0%

Item		Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
PQ	NPQ				
35	31	.12	-.03	.87*	.02
36	32	.74*	.33	.24	.24
37	33	.60*	.35	.28	.05
38	34	.11	.06	.22	.68*
39	35	-.07	.74*	.21	.43
40	36	.51	.48	.39	.15
41	37	.37	-.21	-.17	.57*
42	38	.16	.31	.05	.59*
43	39	.88*	-.02	-.01	-.03
44	40	.80*	-.04	.11	.17
45	41	.71*	.13	.06	.40
46	42	.21	.86*	-.04	-.07
47	43	.28	.20	.77*	.16
48	44	.69*	.25	.32	.33
49	45	.81*	.09	.22	.17

* Indicates primary items loading on a factor

Question Description

PQ	NPQ	
35	31	= willing to put in extra effort
36	32	= great place to work
37	33	= loyalty
38	34	= job assignment
39	35	= similar values
40	36	= proud of employment
41	37	= work for another employer
42	38	= inspiration to do well
43	39	= job change
44	40	= employment decision
45	41	= potential career advancement

Question Description

PQ	NPQ	
46	42	= agreement on Company matters
47	43	= Company fate
48	44	= best place to work
49	45	= good employment choice

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed for factor scores derived from factor analysis computed from sections one, two, three, and four in both types of questionnaires. Significant linear correlations ($p < .05$) for factor scores are displayed in Table V on the following page.

TABLE V
PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATIONS

	FACTA1	FACTA2	FACTB1	FACTB2	FACTB3	FACTB4	FACTC1	FACTC2	FACTC3	FACTD1	FACTD2	FACTD3	FACTD4
FACTA1												
FACTA2												
FACTB1												
FACTB2												
FACTB3												
FACTB4												
FACTC1												
FACTC2												
FACTC3												
FACTD1												
FACTD2												
FACTD3												
FACTD4												

* = Significance < .05 ** = Significance < .01

Key = NAME	FACTOR NUMBER	SECTION	NAME OF FACTOR
FACTA1	I	One	Information about the Company
FACTA2	II	One	Information about the specific department
FACTB1	I	Two	Open communication with managers
FACTB2	II	Two	Training and development
FACTB3	III	Two	Human Resources support
FACTB4	IV	Two	Company philosophy
FACTC1	I	Three	Company mission / philosophy
FACTC2	II	Three	Company activities
FACTC3	III	Three	Company culture
FACTD1	I	Four	Employment decision
FACTD2	II	Four	Shared organizational values
FACTD3	III	Four	Concern about Company success
FACTD4	IV	Four	Job assignment

t-TEST: Employee Status, Start Date, Sex, and Age

A series of t-tests were performed on those dichotomous items in section six of the questionnaire, which includes demographic information about employees. A series of t-tests were run on both factor scores and questions from both types of questionnaires that were not identical.

A t-test was conducted on employee status, with non-exempt employees run as "Group 1" and exempt employees run as "Group 2." Similarly, a t-test was performed on sex, with male employees run as "Group 1" and female employees run as "Group 2." To conduct t-tests on age, those employees up to age 34 were run as "Group 1" and those employees age 35 and over were run as "Group 2." Finally, a t-test was executed on start date. All employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program started working for the Company in 1994 and all employees who participated in the structured socialization program started working for the Company in 1995. Therefore, "Group 1" included those employees who started working for the Company in 1994 and "Group 2" included those employees who started working for the Company in 1995.

Results from significant t-tests showing mean, standard deviation, and 2-tail probability for each factor score and questionnaire items (if the items were not common to each questionnaire) are presented in Table VI.

TABLE VI

t-TESTS: Demographic Variables

t-Test Procedures on Employee Status

No significant results emerged

t-Test Procedures on Start Date

No significant results emerged

t-Test Procedures on Sex

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>2-tail Probability</u>
<u>Participant Question 23</u>						
Male	25	2.07	.92	.47	35	.04
Female	27	1.96	.56			

Participant Question 24

Male	25	1.71	.47	-1.21	35	.05
Female	27	2.00	.80			

t-Test Procedures on Age

<u>Factor</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>2-tail Probability</u>
C3 (Company culture)						
Up to age 34	37	-.11	.74	-.69	50	.01
Age 35 and over	15	.08	1.29			

t-TESTS: Formality of Socialization

A series of t-tests were performed on the factor scores based on those employees who completed the New Employee Orientation Meeting versus those who did not. Results are presented in Table VII. Of the 13 tests only four showed significant differences between the two groups of employees (those who completed the New Employee Orientation Meeting and those who did not). Employees who completed the New Employee Orientation Meeting are identified as "Group 1" and employees who did not are identified as "Group 2."

The data in Table VII shows that employees who completed the New Employee Orientation Meeting were more satisfied with the information they received about their respective department, the open communication they had with their managers, and the Company activities available to them than those employees who did not complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting. However, those employees who did not complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting were more satisfied with the Human Resources support they received during the first week and month of their employment than those employees who did complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting.

TABLE VII

t-TESTS: Formality of Socialization

<u>Factor</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>2-tail Probability</u>
A1 (Information about the Company)						
Group 1	37	-.13	.98	-1.48	48	.15
Group 2	13	.35	1.13			
A2 (Information about the specific department)						
Group 1	37	.20	1.00	2.13	48	.04
Group 2	13	-.47	.93			
B1 (Open communication with managers)						
Group 1	37	.21	.98	2.25	50	.03
Group 2	15	-.45	.89			
B2 (Training and development)						
Group 1	37	-.02	1.04	-.19	50	.85
Group 2	15	.04	.96			
B3 (Human Resources support)						
Group 1	37	-.24	.90	-3.06	50	.00
Group 2	15	.63	1.01			
B4 (Company philosophy)						
Group 1	37	-.14	1.02	-1.61	50	.11
Group 2	15	.35	.92			
C1 (Company mission / philosophy)						
Group 1	38	-.13	.97	-1.57	51	.12
Group 2	15	.34	1.02			
C2 (Company activities)						
Group 1	38	.19	.92	2.35	51	.02
Group 2	15	-.49	1.06			
C3 (Company culture)						
Group 1	38	.09	.98	1.10	51	.28
Group 2	15	-.24	1.04			
D1 (Employment decision)						
Group 1	34	.07	1.14	.68	46	.50
Group 2	14	-.16	.78			
D2 (Shared organizational values)						
Group 1	34	-.11	.95	-1.10	46	.28
Group 2	14	.25	1.18			

TABLE VII

t-TESTS: Formality of Socialization
(CONTINUED)

<u>Factor</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>2-tail Probability</u>
D3 (Concern about Company success)						
Group 1	34	.02	1.08	.65	46	.52
Group 2	14	-.19	.83			
D4 (Job assignment)						
Group 1	34	-.03	.98	-1.37	46	.18
Group 2	14	.37	.73			

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

RQ1: Do new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive that they are aided in becoming accepted, participating members of the organization?

Test results showed that new employees of ConAgra (an organization committed to a structured socialization program) felt they were aided in becoming accepted, participating members of the organization. Results primarily from the descriptive statistics, factor analysis and Pearson product-moment correlations were most indicative in positively answering this research question.

Question means from Tables II and III revealed notable conclusions when examining if new ConAgra employees felt they were accepted, participating members of the Company. Employees who attended the New Employee Orientation Meeting felt that their managers strongly supported their attendance at the meeting. This employee group also indicated that the meeting strengthened their ability to adapt to the Company culture, adhere to Company philosophy, support the Company mission, and develop relationships with other ConAgra employees. Questions 23 (meeting purpose), 24 (managerial support of meeting), 26 (cultural adaptation), 28 (Company philosophy), 29 (Company mission), and 32 (relationships

with other employees) supported these conclusions.

Factor analysis (Table IV) showed that for new ConAgra employees, issues emerged such as having a supportive environment in which to state opinions on how things should be done and following through accordingly. Questions 28 (Company philosophy), 29 (Company mission) and 30 (supportive environment) characterizing Factor I (33% of the variance) measured this particular concept. In addition, Factor II, which accounted for 22% of the variance, revealed that important issues for these new employees were interest in relationships with other employees and Company activities that were available to them, as noted in questions 32 (relationships with other employees) and 33 (Company activities).

Items such as Company culture and mission also loaded highly, which are shown in Factor III, accounting for 17% of the variance. Questions that loaded highly for this factor were 25 (Company culture) and 26 (cultural adaptation). These items showed that for these employees, another issue was knowledge of the organizational culture along with support and understanding of the Company mission.

When reviewing Pearson product-moment correlations (Table V), various factor scores had significant linear correlations, which in turn also helped to positively answer the research question. Factor C1 (Company mission and

philosophy) from section three of the questionnaire had a positive correlation (.45) with Factor A1 (information about the Company) from section one of the questionnaire (pre-employment interviews). This correlation showed that the information employees received during their pre-employment interviews and information they received early in their employment regarding Company mission and philosophy had a significant relationship.

Factor C2 (Company activities) from section three of the questionnaire correlated to a number of other factors. Factor C2 had a positive correlation (.42) with Factor A2 (information about the specific department) from section one of the questionnaire (pre-employment interviews). This correlation revealed that information employees received about their specific department had a direct link to the information they received about the type of Company activities that were available to them. In addition, Factor C2 also had a positive correlation (.37) with Factor B1 (open communication with managers) from section two of the questionnaire (first month of employment). This correlation pointed out that the open communication these employees had with their managers was related to the interest these employees had in being involved in Company activities.

Factor C3 (Company culture) from section three of the questionnaire also had significant correlations with other

factors. First, Factor C3 had a positive correlation (.29) with Factor B1 (open communication with managers) from section two of the questionnaire (first month of employment). In addition, Factor C3 had a positive correlation (.31) with Factor B3 (human resources support) from section two of the questionnaire (first month of employment). These two correlations suggested a positive relationship regarding the open communication with management and the human resources support these employees experienced in relation to how these employees understood and adapted to the Company culture.

RQ2: Do new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive that they possess organizational commitment?

Similar to the results associated with Research Question 1, test results showed that new employees of ConAgra (an organization committed to a structured socialization program) felt a fairly high degree of organizational commitment.

Question means displayed areas where these employees displayed high levels of loyalty. These employees displayed willingness to put in a great deal beyond that normally expected in order to help the Company be successful. And, this employee group indicated that they tell others that ConAgra is a great place to work and are

proud of their employment. Likewise, they felt much loyalty to the Company. Finally, this employee group indicated that they care about the fate of the Company; choosing to work for ConAgra was a wise move on their part. Means for questions 35 (willingness to put in extra effort), 36 (great place to work), 37 (loyalty), 40 (proud of employment), 47 (Company fate), and 49 (good employment choice) supported these conclusions (Table II, section four).

Factor analysis (Table IV, section four) revealed interesting groupings regarding commitment to the organization. The issue, employment decision, illustrated by Factor I, accounted for 42% of the variance; questions that loaded highly on this factor were 36 (great place to work), 37 (loyalty), 40 (proud of employment), 43 (job change), 44 (employment decision), 45 (potential career advancement), 48 (best place to work), and 49 (good employment choice).

When looking further at commitment, another issue that loaded highly in factor analysis was shared organizational values, which is shown in Factor II (12% of the variance). As reflected in questions 39 (similar values) and 46 (agreement on Company matters), this factor indicated that sharing similar organization values was an issue. In addition, agreement on Company policies on important matters relating to employees was also an issue.

Concern about Company success was another area that emerged as significant in factor analysis when considering commitment. Factor III, which accounted for 8% of the variance, showed that the willingness to put in the effort on the job beyond that normally expected was a consideration. In addition, concern about the fate of the Company was also an issue. Questions 35 (willingness to put in extra effort) and 47 (Company fate) supported this factor.

A final area that loaded highly in factor analysis was job assignment. This is illustrated in Factor IV, which accounted for 7% of the variance. Questions 38 (job assignment), 41 (working for a different company), and 42 (inspiration to do well) loaded highly on this factor, showing that how well employees did in their particular position was an issue.

When taking into account the significant linear correlations (Table V), a number of factor scores had significant correlations that also helped to positively answer this research question. Factor D1 (employment decision) from section four of the questionnaire (commitment to the organization) had a positive correlation (.46) with Factor B1 (open communication with managers) from section two of the questionnaire (first month of employment). This relationship suggested that the decision employees made

about working for the Company was related to the open communication they received from their managers. Likewise, Factor D1 had a positive correlation (.45) with Factor C2 (Company activities) from section three of the questionnaire. This correlation pointed to the fact that a relationship existed between how employees viewed their employment decision and the Company activities available to them.

Factor D2 (shared organizational values) from section four of the questionnaire (commitment to the organization) also revealed interesting correlations. Factor D2 had a positive correlation (.55) with Factor C1 (Company mission / philosophy) from section three of the questionnaire. This correlation implied a relationship was present for this employee group between shared organizational values and Company mission and philosophy. Factor D2 also had a positive correlation (.36) with Factor C3 (Company culture) from section three of the questionnaire. Similarly, this correlation suggested that a relationship existed for these employees between shared organizational values and Company culture.

Finally, Factor D2 displayed a positive correlation (.34) with Factor A1 (information about the Company) from section one of the questionnaire (first month of employment). This correlation pointed to a relationship

between information these employees received about the Company in their pre-employment interviews and to the organizational values both the Company and the employees share.

Factor D3 (concern about Company success) from section four of the questionnaire (commitment to the organization) also had a significant correlation. This factor displayed a positive correlation (.42) with Factor C2 (Company activities) from section three of the questionnaire. The relationship between Company activities available to employees and the success of the Company was shown to be a significant one for this employee group.

Finally, Factor D4 (job assignment) from section four of the questionnaire (commitment to the organization) also revealed interesting correlations. Factor D4 had a positive correlation (.48) with Factor C1 (Company mission and philosophy) from section three of the questionnaire. This correlation pointed to the fact that a relationship existed between the employee's job assignment and Company mission and philosophy. In addition, Factor D4 had a positive correlation (.47) with Factor B3 (human resources support) from section two of the questionnaire (first month of employment). This correlation implied that this employee group's job assignment and the support they received from human resources was an important relationship. Finally,

Factor D4 had a positive correlation (.44) with Factor A1 (information about the Company) from section one of the questionnaire (pre-employment interviews). Information this employee group received about the Company and subsequent job assignments formed a significant relationship for this employee group.

RQ3: What differences, if any, are there in how new employees in an organization that stresses structured socialization perceive their position with the organization based on how they are socialized?

The demographic items included in the questionnaire (Table VI) revealed interesting differences relating to how ConAgra employees are socialized in the workplace. The majority of employees who participated in the structured socialization program were exempt females in the 25 to 34 age group. The majority of employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program were exempt males in the 25 to 34 age group.

No significant results emerged when t-tests were conducted using employee status (exempt and non-exempt) and start date. However, t-test results displayed some interesting information regarding differences in sex for those employees who participated in the structured socialization program. As shown in question 23 (meeting purpose) ($p = .04$), female employees were more satisfied

than males when understanding the purpose of the New Employee Orientation Meeting. However, question 24 (managerial support of meeting) ($p = .05$) showed that males were more satisfied than females with the managerial support they received in regard to attending the New Employee Orientation Meeting.

Employee age revealed only one conclusion in relation to new employee socialization within the organization. Factor C3 (Company culture) ($p = .01$) from section three of the questionnaire showed that employees age 35 and over were more satisfied than employees up to age 35 when considering their knowledge of and adaption to Company culture.

When t-tests were performed on factor scores based on those employees who completed the New Employee Orientation Meeting versus those who did not, other notable differences emerged as well. When compared to employees who did not complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting, those who did were more satisfied with the information they received about their respective department ($p = .04$). In addition, they were more satisfied with the open communication they had with their managers ($p = .03$). Finally, they were more satisfied with the Company activities available to them ($p = .02$). However, those employees who did not complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting were more satisfied with the Human Resources support they received during the first week

and month of their employment ($p = .00$) than those employees who did complete the New Employee Orientation Meeting.

When looking at general differences in socialization, employees who participated in the structured socialization program were more formally socialized into the organization by participating in the New Employee Orientation Meeting. This employee group had an advantage over the employee group who did not participate in the structured socialization program: they were able to meet with ConAgra's senior management, who played key roles in stressing the Company's culture, mission, and philosophy. In addition, the Company's senior management was able to show this group how they would fit into the organization by not only adopting the Company culture, mission, and philosophy, but also by contributing their own personal strengths, knowledge, and values to the organization. The meeting also gave this employee group the chance to meet other new employees, thereby giving these employees a sense of fitting into the organization, something that employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program did not have the opportunity to formally do.

However, when looking at the commitment levels of these two employee groups, there were few notable differences. So, it would appear that both employee groups overall are satisfied with their employment with the Company, as shown

in the results of tests run on section four of the questionnaire (commitment to the organization).

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions (Section Five of Both Types of Questionnaires)

While the answers to the questions in section five of both types of questionnaires (Appendices F and G) were not statistically analyzed, it is still critical that these responses be examined. Because of the nature of open-ended questions, some of the more candid and revealing attitudes of both employee groups came through. A summary of these findings is included below.

What was the biggest surprise for you upon joining ConAgra?

For those employees who participated in the structured socialization program, two of the biggest surprises that were consistently mentioned were the size of the Company and the outdated computer system. Employees in this group stated that they didn't realize how large and diverse ConAgra was until they started working for the Company. This employee group was amazed at the number of companies ConAgra owns; in addition, the concept of the Independent Operating Companies (IOC) was a novel idea. Employees were surprised at how ConAgra lets each Company it owns basically run itself with minimal Corporate intervention.

As previously stated, employees who participated in the structured socialization program also were surprised at how

seemingly outdated the computer system was. Employees complained that there was an obvious lack of current E-mail and software programs. Employees saw this as a setback for a company the importance and magnitude of ConAgra.

Other "surprises" for this employee group were: a relaxed working environment, too much supervision, a flat management structure, and too much overtime. In addition, some employees in this group noted that many departments within Corporate did not embrace the Company philosophy, which they viewed as a serious management flaw.

Employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program had different "surprises." Most notably, this group stated that unrealistic job expectations greeted them at the beginning of their employment. The job expectations that were presented during their pre-employment interviews and the subsequent reality were very different. In addition, this employee group stated that management didn't provide regular (if any) performance reviews. As stated by this employee group, how can they know where they stand in the organization (or advance, for that matter) if there is no structured feedback? Finally, employees in this group felt that many positions within Corporate were very low paying in relation to the work that was involved with the job.

What has been the best aspect of your transition to ConAgra?

Both employee groups tended to address the same issues relating to this question. Employees responded that friendly people, good coworkers and freedom on the job were among the best things about ConAgra. Items such as Company-sponsored activities as a way to get to know others were also important. Interestingly, both groups also stated that they have a supportive management staff, which counters statements made about management in the previous question.

What would have made your transition to ConAgra a better experience for you?

Again, both employee groups tended to address the same issues relating to this question. The responses to this question related to those in the first question, which dealt with the element of surprise. "We need more training!" was a common answer to this question. Employees felt that there was little, if any, formal training. "Learning as you go" seemed to be the most common type of training for both employee groups. The lack of training also was attributed to an unrealistic view of the job. As shown in the first question, some employees felt that the lack of training they received on the job clouded their view of what was expected of them.

Extending on the concept of job training and expectations, employees in both groups stated that there

appeared to be little mentoring for new employees; a mentor would have helped in the transition process. Feelings of loneliness and isolation were expressed which could influence how the employees would perceive themselves being accepted as valued members of the organization. In addition, some employees also stated that there appeared to little control in their respective departments, which led them to wonder "who's in charge?"

When examining the answers in all three questions, it was obvious that what was a positive experience for some employees was not the case for others. It was clear that while some employees stated "I have a great manager!" others stated "I wonder who's in charge here?" In addition, another consistent finding revealed that some employees stated that they felt like an outsider in their respective departments, while others said their coworkers were friendly and helpful.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The present thesis results generally support the original assumptions of this thesis. The organizational commitment to employee socialization helps new employees at ConAgra become accepted, participating members of the organization. In addition, this socialization is associated with organizational commitment for these new employees. However, when looking at differences in socialization and commitment between employees who participated in the structured socialization program and those who did not, there was not a great deal of differences between the two employee groups.

A primary goal of this thesis was to determine if employees in an organization committed to a structured socialization program were helped in becoming accepted, participating members of the organization. In the present study, the results showed a common pattern of responses among participants, indicating that understanding the ConAgra mission and philosophy were of vital importance to the employees. In addition, this employee group felt that the program reinforced the fact that they could easily adapt to the organizational culture. Management support of the socialization program was also apparent with this employee

group. Finally, the program strengthened the notion that building relationships with other ConAgra employees was essential to success within the Company.

Another goal of this thesis was to conclude if a structured socialization program increased new employees' organizational commitment. When examining how committed new ConAgra employees are to the organization, the following observations were made: new employees displayed high levels of loyalty to the Company. They felt that accepting employment with ConAgra was a positive move and in turn were willing to put in a great deal of effort on the job. Similarly, these employees placed a great deal of pride in their work. Finally, they expressed concern about the fate of the Company, which corresponded to high loyalty among these employees.

Finally, this thesis sought to determine if there were differences in how new employees perceived their position within the organization based on how they were socialized. Test results showed that there were few, if any, real differences in how these employees saw their role in the Company based on how they were socialized. While the New Employee Orientation Meeting certainly added value to how well new employees were socialized into the organization, those who did not participate in this meeting showed similar responses to how they viewed their socialization into the

organization.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this thesis. The primary limitation was the small overall sample size of $N = 53$ and particularly the small sample size of employees who did not participate in the structured socialization program ($N = 15$). Although the overall response rate was fairly high (56.6%), the small sample may have affected some of the results. However, due to the nature of the study, finding appropriate samples may be difficult to obtain in organizations.

The lack of variance in responses was also a limiting factor in this thesis. Participants tended to respond to questions favoring one end of the spectrum; the majority of respondents agreed to strongly agreed to most of the questions positively phrased and disagreed to strongly disagreed to most of the questions negatively phrased. This lack of variance resulted in few significant differences when looking at how employees perceived their position at ConAgra based on how they were socialized.

Lastly, the questionnaire itself may have been a limitation of this thesis. The instrument was not formally pre-tested and had not been used in formal research prior to this particular study. (An exception to this was the questions that comprised section four of the questionnaire,

which were derived from Mowday and Steers' (1979) *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ).) Therefore, the validity and reliability of the instrument remains in question.

Recommendations for Studying Socialization in a Large Organization

The results of this study have meaningful implications for those individuals responsible for socializing new employees into the organization. Most employees who took part in this study overall were satisfied with their employment at ConAgra and were committed to the organization, as shown in the responses to the questions in the questionnaire. However, studying such a small population may not be representative of the large employee base at the Company. In addition, examining socialization at one specific time of the individual's employment may not reveal long-term outcomes of job satisfaction and commitment. Thus, the examination of employee socialization must be ongoing in order to be effective.

While employing the use of the New Employee Orientation Meeting has proven to be successful when socializing new ConAgra employees, this method cannot be viewed as the primary way to help employees feel part of the organization. Other means of socialization that were pointed out in the review of the literature must also be given credence.

Organizations must look to see what type of tactics they are using when socializing new employees and determine if those tactics are appropriate. The responses to the questionnaire from both employee groups tended to point to an informal, individual type of socialization (although the New Employee Orientation Meeting was formal and collective in nature). Additionally, ConAgra employees tended to move in a nonsequential, variable pattern when learning job duties. And, their ideas and thoughts were encouraged by management, which points to an investiture socialization approach. Thus, organizations must determine if patterns of socialization tactics are apparent and to use or remedy them if necessary.

While the New Employee Orientation Meeting has proven to be successful so far, another program that ConAgra has recently incorporated is "Connect with ConAgra." This program pairs new employees with current employees. The current employee serves as a mentor, being available to the new employee for things such as questions and lunch. The current employee, in essence, serves as a mentor and role model for the new employee. The success of this program, however, has yet to be established. One problem that has occurred with this program is matching employees who are compatible with each other. In addition, many employees do not keep in contact with each other after the initial

meeting, which could be the result of compatibility between the employees. Therefore, a relationship is not formed; however, the combination of a professional and personal relationship could benefit both employees. The examination of this program, in conjunction with the New Employee Orientation Meeting, could prove beneficial to the Company.

While the use of these two programs and the tactics incorporated in each are useful socialization tools, employee retention must also be considered, which is related to commitment to the organization. Because the employee groups that were surveyed have now been with the organization for about two years, it would be interesting to examine how they now view their position within the organization. Have these employees been promoted or terminated (either voluntarily or involuntarily)? Or, have they remained in their current position, satisfied or unsatisfied? Long-term effects of socialization and commitment would be vital to examine in order to determine the overall effectiveness of the tactics used to socialize these employees.

The anecdotal comments collected in this study also have important implications for organizational socialization. This type of feedback is sometimes where companies can get the most candid information from their employees. When asked how they viewed their overall

transition to ConAgra, many employees responded that the Company did not provide adequate training and that the computer systems were antiquated, thus affecting how effective they could be on their jobs. (See Appendices F and G for complete comments.) Although these anecdotal comments are the perceptions of a small group of employees, the ultimate integrity and success of employee socialization could be affected. Companies need to listen to and respond to the needs of their new (and all other) employees in order to increase employee job satisfaction and commitment.

Finally, the demographic information yielded interesting results that could be valuable to ConAgra and other large corporations. Overall, exempt employees seemed more satisfied with their employment than non-exempt employees. And, employees age 35 and over seemed to be more satisfied with their employment with the Company than those employees under age 35. While it cannot be verified, it would appear that exempt employees, who usually have higher-paying jobs than non-exempt employees, would obviously be more satisfied with their position due to factors such as pay and advancement potential. And, it could also be perceived that younger employees are more independent and more likely to not stay with the Company if other opportunities for career advancement came along. Companies need to ensure that all employment levels and ages of

employees are taken into account when socializing them into the workplace.

Implications for Future Research

The present study sought to examine how new employees are socialized in the workplace. Because of some of the limitations previously discussed, there are suggestions for future research.

Future research on organizational socialization needs to examine a larger base of new employees than that used in the present study in order to gather significant and usable data. As is the case with ConAgra, many companies make up the organization. It may be beneficial to compare how new employees are socialized among the various ConAgra Companies. This would give an interesting perspective to how ConAgra employee socialization differs from Company to Company. This type of analysis could also benefit other similar companies. In addition, follow-up studies on the employee base would be beneficial to determine long-term effects and outcomes of how these employees were socialized. Follow-up studies could enhance an examination such as the one used in the present study.

The methodology of the present study may also need to be revised for future studies. As shown in the present study, respondents tended to answer questions positively phrased in the questionnaire with "agree" or "strongly

agree" and with "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to questions negatively phrased. Questionnaire items may need to be worded in such a way to ensure a variety of responses among respondents. Pre-testing the survey instrument would be beneficial in this case.

Socializing new employees in the workplace is more complex than the present study suggests. More descriptive, qualitative methods may more effectively capture the complex processes, dimensions, limitations and effectiveness of organizational socialization.

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APPENDIX A



April 12, 1996

As an employee of ConAgra, the first weeks and months on the job are challenging and exciting. Learning a new job, working with new people, and experiencing a new work environment are all part of the total process of becoming a true ConAgran. Those first few weeks and months are critical to both you and the Company. You want to feel that you can become an accepted, participating member of ConAgra. In turn, the Company must provide opportunities that can make your transition a positive experience.

This topic is an important one in the area of organizational communication that I am exploring in my graduate research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The goal of the enclosed survey addresses how you feel about your experience as a newcomer to ConAgra (starting date on or after July 1, 1994). This survey has been reviewed and approved by Corporate Human Resources. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following statements, basing your answers on your own personal experiences. Your anonymity is assured. After completing the survey, please return it to me at CC-240 by Friday, April 26, 1996.

Your participation in this survey is vital and valuable. All data will be treated confidentially at all times. The results of the survey will be included in my master's thesis.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, you can contact me at extension 4105 or on EIS (CKM1).

Sincerely,

Caroline K. Gran
Communication Graduate Student
University of Nebraska at Omaha

APPENDIX B



May 3, 1996

As an employee of ConAgra, the first weeks and months on the job are challenging and exciting. Learning a new job, working with new people, and experiencing a new work environment are all part of the total process of becoming a true ConAgran. Those first few weeks and months are critical to both you and the Company. You want to feel that you can become an accepted, participating member of ConAgra. In turn, the Company must provide opportunities that can make your transition a positive experience.

This topic is an important one in the area of organizational communication that I am exploring in my graduate research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The goal of the enclosed survey addresses how you feel about your experience as a newcomer to ConAgra (starting date on or after January 1, 1994). This survey has been reviewed and approved by Corporate Human Resources. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following statements, basing your answers on your own personal experiences. Your anonymity is assured. After completing the survey, please return it to me at CC-240 by Tuesday, May 14, 1996.

Your participation in this survey is vital and valuable. All data will be treated confidentially at all times. The results of the survey will be included in my master's thesis.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, you can contact me at extension 4105 or on EIS (CKM1).

Sincerely,

Caroline K. Gran
Communication Graduate Student
University of Nebraska at Omaha

APPENDIX C

You recently received a questionnaire regarding your experience as a new employee to ConAgra. If you have already completed the questionnaire and returned it to me, thank you very much. If you haven't, please take a few minutes to do so. Your input is very important. If you need a questionnaire, please call me at extension 4105 or EIS (CKM1) and I'll get one to you. Please return your completed questionnaire to me at CC-240 by _____. Again, thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

APPENDIX D

Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate your response to that statement:

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Neutral (N)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

Circle the X that best describes your response, marking only one answer.

SECTION ONE: This section asks you to respond to statements related to your interview(s) with ConAgra before accepting employment with the Company.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I received a full description of the job duties.	X	X	X	X	X
2. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I received relevant information about how ConAgra operates.	X	X	X	X	X
3. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I felt that ConAgra was a place where I would want to work.	X	X	X	X	X
4. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I was given realistic expectations of how I would fit into the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
5. When interviewing with my prospective manager, I received pertinent information about how the department operates.	X	X	X	X	X
6. When interviewing with my prospective manager, I received realistic expectations of the job.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I was able to talk openly to prospective coworkers to get a look at the day-to-day aspects of the job.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION TWO: This section asks you to respond to statements related to your first month of employment with ConAgra.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. My manager thoroughly explained ConAgra's philosophy to me.	X	X	X	X	X
9. My manager strongly reinforced to me the job expectations and duties.	X	X	X	X	X
10. My manager fully explained when and how performance reviews are conducted.	X	X	X	X	X
11. My manager openly discussed with me ConAgra's policy of equal employment opportunity.	X	X	X	X	X
12. My manager strongly encouraged me to discuss with him/her any problems or concerns I may have.	X	X	X	X	X
13. Corporate Human Resources personnel contacted me during my first week of employment to openly discuss any concerns or questions I had about the job or the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
14. Corporate Human Resources personnel contacted me after one month of employment to candidly discuss any concerns or questions I had about the job or the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
15. The expectations I had before I started my job and the reality of the job are the same.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
16.I was able to develop good rapport with my coworkers.	X	X	X	X	X
17.While learning job duties, my manager provided me with strong assistance and guidance.	X	X	X	X	X
18.When learning the duties of my job, I received formal training from my departmental coworkers and/or manager.	X	X	X	X	X
19.The training I received was presented in a step-by-step manner.	X	X	X	X	X
20.I was able to easily learn one task before learning another.	X	X	X	X	X
21.I felt comfortable presenting to my manager my ideas on how the job duties could be performed.	X	X	X	X	X
22.If I had a question about the job, I usually asked my manager before I asked my coworker(s).	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION THREE: This section asks you to respond to statements related to the New Employee Orientation Meeting conducted by ConAgra Corporate Human Resources.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. I fully understood the purpose of the meeting prior to attending.	X	X	X	X	X
24. My manager strongly supported both his/her and my attendance at this meeting.	X	X	X	X	X
25. My knowledge of the organizational culture greatly increased through attending this meeting.	X	X	X	X	X
26. I feel that I can easily adapt to the culture that exists at the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
27. The presentations made by Company representatives were highly relevant to my own position within the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
28. I agree with the Company's philosophy that focus, openness, honesty, and discipline are highly essential for my success at ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
29. I completely understand and support ConAgra's mission: to maximize the wealth of the stockholders.	X	X	X	X	X
30. I feel I have a supportive environment in which to make important contributions to the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
31. By attending this orientation, I am fully confident that I have the freedom to state opinions on how things should be done and to follow through accordingly.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
32. I am very interested in building relationships with employees outside my own department.	X	X	X	X	X
33. I am very interested in the Company activities that are available to me.	X	X	X	X	X
34. This orientation was an important part of becoming a participating, accepted ConAgra employee.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION FOUR: This section asks you to respond to statements regarding your overall commitment to ConAgra.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
35. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the Company be successful.	X	X	X	X	X
36. I tell people I know that ConAgra is a great place to work.	X	X	X	X	X
37. I feel very little loyalty to ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
38. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
39. I find that my values and ConAgra's values are very similar.	X	X	X	X	X
40. I am proud to tell others that I am a part of the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
41. I could easily work for a different company as long as the type of work was similar.	X	X	X	X	X
42. ConAgra really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	X	X	X	X	X
43. It would take very little change in my present situation to cause me to leave ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
44. I am very glad that I chose ConAgra to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
45. There's not too much to be gained by staying with ConAgra indefinitely.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
46. I often find it difficult to agree with the Company's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	X	X	X	X	X
47. I really care about the fate of ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
48. For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	X	X	X	X	X
49. Deciding to work for ConAgra was a definite mistake on my part.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION FIVE: This section asks you to give some general comments about your experience as a new employee with ConAgra.

50. What was the biggest surprise for you upon joining ConAgra?

51. What has been the best aspect of your transition to ConAgra?

52. What would have made your transition to ConAgra a better experience for you?

SECTION SIX: It is important to know something about you in order to better analyze the results. Please place an X in the blank that best describes you. **Confidentiality is guaranteed.**

1. Employee Status:

- Salaried Non-exempt (receive pay for overtime)
 Salaried Exempt (do not receive pay for overtime)

2. Sex

- Male
 Female

3. Employee Start Date

(Month Only)

4. Age Group:

- up to 25
 25 to 34
 35 to 44
 45 to 54
 Over 55

Please return the survey to Caroline Gran at CC-240 by **Friday, April 26, 1996.** Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E

Beside each of the statements presented below, please indicate your response to that statement:

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Neutral (N)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

Circle the X that best describes your response, marking only one answer.

SECTION ONE: This section asks you to respond to statements related to your interview(s) with ConAgra before accepting employment with the Company.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I received a full description of the job duties.	X	X	X	X	X
2. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I received relevant information about how ConAgra operates.	X	X	X	X	X
3. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I felt that ConAgra was a place where I would want to work.	X	X	X	X	X
4. During my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I was given realistic expectations of how I would fit into the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
5. When interviewing with my prospective manager, I received pertinent information about how the department operates.	X	X	X	X	X
6. When interviewing with my prospective manager, I received realistic expectations of the job.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I was able to talk openly to prospective coworkers to get a look at the day-to-day aspects of the job.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION TWO: This section asks you to respond to statements related to your first month of employment with ConAgra.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. My manager thoroughly explained ConAgra's philosophy to me.	X	X	X	X	X
9. My manager strongly reinforced to me the job expectations and duties.	X	X	X	X	X
10. My manager fully explained when and how performance reviews are conducted.	X	X	X	X	X
11. My manager openly discussed with me ConAgra's policy of equal employment opportunity.	X	X	X	X	X
12. My manager strongly encouraged me to discuss with him/her any problems or concerns I may have.	X	X	X	X	X
13. Corporate Human Resources personnel contacted me during my first week of employment to openly discuss any concerns or questions I had about the job or the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
14. Corporate Human Resources personnel contacted me after one month of employment to candidly discuss any concerns or questions I had about the job or the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
15. The expectations I had before I started my job and the reality of the job are the same.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
16.I was able to develop good rapport with my coworkers.	X	X	X	X	X
17.While learning job duties, my manager provided me with strong assistance and guidance.	X	X	X	X	X
18.When learning the duties of my job, I received formal training from my departmental coworkers and/or manager.	X	X	X	X	X
19.The training I received was presented in a step-by-step manner.	X	X	X	X	X
20.I was able to easily learn one task before learning another.	X	X	X	X	X
21.I felt comfortable presenting to my manager my ideas on how the job duties could be performed.	X	X	X	X	X
22.If I had a question about the job, I usually asked my manager before I asked my coworker(s).	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION THREE: This section asks you to respond to statements relating to ConAgra's culture, mission, environment, etc.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. My knowledge of the organizational culture has greatly increased since I started working for the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
24. I feel that I can easily adapt to the culture that exists at the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
25. I agree with the Company's philosophy that focus, openness, honesty, and discipline are highly essential for my success at ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
26. I completely understand and support ConAgra's mission: to maximize the wealth of the stockholders.	X	X	X	X	X
27. I feel I have a supportive environment in which to make important contributions to the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
28. I am fully confident that I have the freedom to state opinions on how things should be done and to follow through accordingly.	X	X	X	X	X
29. I am very interested in building relationships with employees outside my own department.	X	X	X	X	X
30. I am very interested in the Company activities that are available to me.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION FOUR: This section asks you to respond to statements regarding your overall commitment to ConAgra.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
31. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the Company be successful.	X	X	X	X	X
32. I tell people I know that ConAgra is a great place to work.	X	X	X	X	X
33. I feel very little loyalty to ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
34. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
35. I find that my values and ConAgra's values are very similar.	X	X	X	X	X
36. I am proud to tell others that I am a part of the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
37. I could easily work for a different company as long as the type of work was similar.	X	X	X	X	X
38. ConAgra really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	X	X	X	X	X
39. It would take very little change in my present situation to cause me to leave ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
40. I am very glad that I chose ConAgra to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined the Company.	X	X	X	X	X
41. There's not too much to be gained by staying with ConAgra indefinitely.	X	X	X	X	X

	SA	A	N	D	SD
42.I often find it difficult to agree with the Company's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	X	X	X	X	X
43.I really care about the fate of ConAgra.	X	X	X	X	X
44.For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	X	X	X	X	X
45.Deciding to work for ConAgra was a definite mistake on my part.	X	X	X	X	X

SECTION FIVE: This section asks you to give some general comments about your experience as a new employee with ConAgra.

46. What was the biggest surprise for you upon joining ConAgra?

47. What has been the best aspect of your transition to ConAgra?

48. What would have made your transition to ConAgra a better experience for you?

SECTION SIX: It is important to know something about you in order to better analyze the results. Please place an X in the blank that best describes you. **Confidentiality is guaranteed.**

1. Employee Status:

- Salaried Non-exempt (receive pay for overtime)
 Salaried Exempt (do not receive pay for overtime)

2. Sex

- Male
 Female

3. Employee Start Date

- (Month Only)

4. Age Group:

- up to 25
 25 to 34
 35 to 44
 45 to 54
 Over 55

Please return the survey to Caroline Gran at CC-240 by Friday, April 26, 1996. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX F

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 50 - 52: EMPLOYEES WHO PARTICIPATED
IN THE STRUCTURED SOCIALIZATION PROGRAM

50. What was the biggest surprise for you upon joining
ConAgra?

Openness

Lack of political and bureaucratic negativity

Poor level of staff/administrative skills among middle
management

Low emphasis on formal training

First-name basis for everyone

How big/diverse ConAgra really is

Relaxed atmosphere

Friendliness

Not really a surprise but no matter where you go to work you
generally encounter certain types of co-workers, to put it
delicately

In my interviews with corporate personnel and with people in
my own department, I was led to believe that ConAgra wants
self-starters. I even questioned this to make sure since I
do not need and do not want close supervision. This has not
come true. I cannot do anything without letting my lead
aware of it. This was my biggest surprise and I am still
trying to deal with it.

The support of my manager --- he backs you up in "strong"
verbal discussions.

The biggest surprise for me was the size of ConAgra. I
never realized exactly how large of a company it was and how
many employees ConAgra had.

Independence of IOCs.

The size

The biggest surprise for me was that even though this is a
very large and profitable corporation, it doesn't have the
very nicest equipment and the most up-to-date computers and

software. Its equipment is good enough to get by.

The amount of companies owned by ConAgra

The personalized welcome

How big ConAgra is!

A new best friend

That the company tends to be very departmentalized despite its success

Flat management system, no corporate levels (programmer, senior programmer, etc.) to climb

Although it was explained to me in my interview with Corporate Human Resources, I was amazed by the degree of decentralization within ConAgra.

The amount of overtime expected for my position when I was told during the job interview that overtime was not an issue.

No evaluation or compensation procedures were established for our department.

Lack of respect by other employees regarding the "benefits" and/or "perks" of being a ConAgra employee.

The lack of corporate control --- the diversity of opinions various IOCs have regarding corporate

The sweat-shop mentality; management does not listen to employees; very inconsistent management direction.

The V.P. did not take the time to meet me; the insurance plan was not as good as the one where I used to work; 80's technology in a Fortune 500 company; the opportunity for training is limited; the \$1,500 per year cap on tuition assistance is low; employee picnic is nice.

Computer and software was outdated; did not know how large the Company is.

How far behind the Company is regarding many business functions and technology. The independent IOC philosophy is carried to its logical extreme (the individual) is out of

control. There needs to be something that binds all aspects of the company together while letting each IOC function independently. Corporate needs to lead us. Follow.

The cohesiveness of employees within their respective departments.

The separateness of the four buildings on campus. I would like all employees to participate in an arranged "tour" of the other buildings on campus so we are each aware of its functions.

The confusing benefits package. We need refresher courses on how CRISP works.

No available booklet listing the departments of who works in them and their function. If I need to talk to someone in Finance, etc., I have no idea who to contact.

Flatness of the Organizational Structure in Refrigerated Foods.

The biggest surprises after joining ConAgra is two-fold. I was really taken back at the philosophy that ConAgra espouts. It was a refreshing new approach. However, I was equally surprised at the lack of evidence in my department of the actual implementation and embracing of this philosophy. Here, they don't practice what Phil Fletcher preaches. It makes me curious if indeed the whole philosophy is nothing but smoke and mirrors.

Meeting higher level people.

The diverseness of the company.

51. What has been the best aspect of your transition to ConAgra?

Philosophy pamphlet

Orientation

Personal tour by Barb M.

Personal help with benefits by Caroline G.

Casual dress

My Department feels like a small shop but provides the

benefits of a big company.

CRISP (Ease and Useful).

Encouragement of co-workers and supervisors.

Also help from other divisions throughout.

Definitely a learning experience. The job entails mostly on-the-job training type of information.

People are very friendly. The personnel department, including benefits, has been very informative and helpful.

The people that I work with within my department plus the willingness of my manager to give me my head---i.e., here's the task - go accomplish it.

There are plenty of opportunities to get to know people. I have joined several sports leagues/teams in hopes of meeting people.

Friendly people and co-workers.

Learning a new industry.

Co-workers.

I have a very patient and talented manager who is very good at explaining projects and procedures to me. He has made my day-to-day routine very easy to get into.

The people in my department are great.

The great people that I work with.

The relaxed and friendly nature of my co-workers.

The feeling of being involved in Corporate America--small town yet large global company.

Relocation package was excellent and generous. It made me feel I am important to the company.

People from HR and department are nice and friendly.

The lack of bureaucratic control and office politics.

Commuting to the job site.

The initial environment was one which allowed creativity and openness.

Understanding and respectful managers

Great people.

Human Resources have been wonderful to work with.

The people I work directly with and for.

The vice-president let us know if there was anything we needed to make our job better, let him know. He followed up with our suggestions.

The majority of people are great and manage to work effectively within the bounds of internal business constraints. The physical work environment is nice. The company does appear to show genuine concern for its employees, aka closing early on snow days, providing a fitness center, casual Fridays, company store, etc.

Having a free lot to park in!

A very comfortable environment in order to make the transition.

The best aspect of my "transition" to ConAgra has been the Corporate HR department. They have been patient. They have always helped me find an answer. Throughout my career HR has been the enemy. Here, at corporate at least, they have been kind, understanding, and helpful. I only wish that I could work for them instead of where I'm at.

Big company and job security.

The change from a manufacturing environment to corporate.

52. What would have made your transition to ConAgra a better experience for you?

More info on appraisal expectations and requirements

Documented common code.

More technical training.

Job description. Some things you learn as you go along. Some surprises.

Training is definitely a weak point although as I delve more and more into my position I realize that a comprehensive, all encompassing training program would be difficult to establish and lengthy for a person to go through - and sometimes the best way to learn something is to actually do it - or learn as you go.

It would have been nice if more people in my department introduced themselves to me and asked to go to lunch, for a walk, etc. I was very lonely.

With very little instructions from manager whether written or oral, more documentation of procedures that were in place - sometimes you find things out just by accident.

A more extensive job training program. I realize that most of the managers are extremely busy, but I think it would serve the departments, and ConAgra as a whole, better if they spent a little more time ensuring that each employee is properly trained.

Since I work a lot with accounting and the General Ledger system I would welcome a training course on the Mainframe and G/L system. Much of this I ended up learning as I went but I still do not feel that I have a solid grasp of all the concepts.

Nothing.

Realistic job description and expectations.

My manager knowing what he wanted out of this position and sticking to that description.

I don't think the experience could have been any better.

I cannot think of anything. The transition was very smooth.

Orientation right at beginning. I think a tour of the different buildings and facilities should be incorporated.

It would be much better if there is no snow in Omaha.

More orientation to the Project I am working on and with the IOCs that I support.

More formal training. Too much of the training was on-the-job with insufficient feedback from my manager.

Knowing the issues from #50 above and also knowing if flex time was allowed.

Happier (or more contact) co-workers.

Not possible.

I wish I would have been given a more realistic view of the position I was hired for. I would not have taken the job if I knew the truth about the position.

Nothing, the transition was easy.

Better training. Previous staff was temporary and did not know a lot of questions I presented to her.

I didn't ask some questions in the interview process that in retrospect, I should have. The questions related to the real work environment vs. the perceived one. HR has been helpful and I feel are attempting to improve the quality of service they provide. This is good.

A plan for orientation within my work group would have been helpful. I'm flexible and open to change so all in all (less a few surprises) the transition has been smooth.

An employee booklet as described above.

A thorough session regarding benefits. When I arrived all I got was a huge envelope with tons of confusing literature. I'm still not sure how vacation, sick leave, CRISP works!

A campus-wide tour.

I could write volumes on what ConAgra could do better. However, I'm sure it would fall on deaf ears.

As a suggestion:

#1 As good as HR is, they need to realize that when prospective employees come to ConAgra from another state, Omaha is a foreign country. I arrived here not knowing where anything is or how to get there when I found out. I still haven't been able to find a dentist or an eye doctor. Every time I try to find the Driver's License office, I get lost. If HR can give out a confusing 12 inch stack of benefits information, then can't they provide some community help information? Otherwise, ConAgra's/Omaha's community support network is nonexistent.

#2 I received a 12 inch stack of benefits material. It took me and my wife a long time to weed and read through that material. Isn't there any way to reduce the amount of stuff that we have to receive?

#3 ConAgra needs to be more honest and conduct a reality check. I have been sentenced to 1 year with ConAgra and I would have appreciated it if they would have told me that I was.....

- A. not going to be received as a team member, but ostracized as an outsider.
- B. not going to be allowed to offer 13 years of skills.
- C. not going to be allowed to offer suggestions without chastisement.
- D. going to be just another warm body in another corporate foxhole.
- E. just plain not going to be accepted as a valued member of this organization.

If I would have had an experience in the programming language (Cobol) and also in the mainframe systems, JCL, CICS and DB2 then I would have joined in different position and that could have been a better experience.

Possibly do performance evaluations at 1, 2, 3, 6 and 12 month intervals.

APPENDIX G

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 46 - 48: EMPLOYEES WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE STRUCTURED SOCIALIZATION PROGRAM

46. What was the biggest surprise for you upon joining ConAgra?

No real contact with other department; not much of an orientation by H.R.

Lack of uniformity of procedures.

The lack of organized training.

That technology (computers) is fairly old and outdated.

The biggest surprise was how poorly I feel ConAgra is using their resources of people and money. There's duplication of efforts and duplication of tasks, money being wasted because there's no joint effort to save money, and my department is way behind on technological advances.

We don't act like a 28+ billion dollar company when it comes to buying computer equipment. My old company was a fraction the size of ConAgra but believed that current tech. (i.e. workstations, better E-Mail system like Lotus notes.) was a good investment because it greatly improved productivity. ConAgra does not seem to have central I.S. direction to drive us to keep pace with technology.

The number of companies that ConAgra owned amazed me.

1. Low salaries.
2. No performance reviews - regardless of salary raises a performance review should be done on an ongoing basis.

How hard it is to get to know other people outside your department. If they don't work in your department it is difficult to know other ConAgrans.

People do not work together very much.

My friendly co-workers and all the organizations we are able to help.

Special treatment of the employees.

- 1) Finding out the person who hired me (my manager) was leaving ConAgra two weeks after I started.
- 2) Finding out some of the things told to me during my

inter-views about my job and the way things operated in this department were not totally true.

The size and complexity of the company.

Being so independent does not always equal the best decision for ConAgra.

Being a public company forces us to make short term decisions instead of long term.

47. What has been the best aspect of your transition to ConAgra?

I really like and respect the person I work for. He is very complimentary, helpful and understanding.

- 1) Knowledge gained of business world.
- 2) Direct managers.

I cannot really say as this is my first experience in a corporate environment. Though I have been disappointed within my department, I have still gained valuable knowledge. However, I feel I could be doing much more for the money ConAgra is paying me and I was led to believe I would be doing more.

My boss has been very supportive.

The helpfulness and generosity of my co-workers.

Our project is very progressive in mgmt style. We are empowered to make decisions, have flex-time, are allowed to wear casual clothes, managers don't "stand over your shoulder," etc. I left a lot of "Red Tape" behind when I joined ConAgra.

Being able to spend more time with my family, and having to take a vacation.

Friendly co workers.

- Once you get to know people--they are very friendly.
- The people in my department are friendly and easy to get to know.

N/A

Uncertain.

A very supportive manager and good co-workers.

48. What would have made your transition to ConAgra a better experience for you?

A program like is in place now where another employee acts as mentor and friend.

1) My managers directly above me - some of the other departments appear much more difficult to work for.

Clearly defined goals and measures for performance.

More up front meetings with employees, ways to make you more welcome by the department.

Periodic reviews with my immediate supervisor/manager during the first year or so. This would have helped me to know if I'm doing what's expected of me and if I'm doing the job I was hired for and if it's in accordance with my job description.

Nothing.

Nothing. (Unless I started as CEO (Just Joking)).

The transition was great!

- More inter/intra department meetings--times to get together and talk--everyone is too busy to socialize or "get to know" each other.

(- Everyone has one idea only "Increase EPS")

If we all work together we could do this!

Little longer training time.

N/A

1) If most of the people I was working with didn't make me feel like an outcast for the first few months I began working here.

2) Having a manager for the department instead of everyone else thinking they were in charge and running the show.

It would have helped knowing someone on a personal level.

Co-workers arranged various meetings with senior management of various corporate departments which allowed me to meet and understand what corporate really does.